



DUDE

1

VOLUME 1 NO. 4

FORM 1040

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THE DUDE

WILLIAM FAULKNER
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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

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*a powerful novelette about a strange love affair
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our cartoonists will tickle you...

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LOOK FOR THE NEW ISSUE OF THE DUDE ON YOUR NEWSSTAND IN MARCH



It was hot that day. Devilishly hot.

I had gone down to the beach. I wanted to be alone.



The hell I wanted to be alone! I was bored. Perhaps, I thought, something will happen. Something . . . intriguing.

INTRIGUE



I saw something stir in the distance. Then come closer.



And closer.

Then I recognized her.

Drot! It was my wife. My unintriguing wife.

A variation on the theme:
what's life without a wife?





Then something happened. Suddenly, I wasn't quite so bored any more.

In fact—I was a little intrigued. She was really intriguing as hell, I decided.



I looked down at her loveliness . . .

and kissed her loveliness . . .

and touched her loveliness . . .

and I wanted her loveliness, and it was mine

forever . . .



CARCASSONNE

fiction . . . WILLIAM FAULKNER

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE



ILLUSTRATED BY BORIS LURIE

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A man can dream of many things in one night — past, future, the mysteries behind everything . . .

And me on a buckskin pony with eyes like blue electricity and a mane like tangled fire, galloping up the hill and right off into the high heaven of the world

His skeleton lay still. Perhaps it was thinking about this. Anyway, after a time it groaned. But it said nothing, which is certainly not like you he thought you are not like yourself, but I can't say that a little quiet is not pleasant

He lay beneath an unrolled strip of tarred roofing made of paper. All of him that is, save that part which suffered neither insects nor temperature and which galloped unflagging on the destinationless pony, up a piled silver hill of cumulus where no hoof echoed nor left print, toward the blue precipice never gained. This part was neither flesh nor unflesh and he tingled a little pleasantly with its lackful contemplation as he lay beneath the tarred paper bedclothing.

So were the mechanics of sleeping, of denning up for the night, simplified. Each morning the entire bed rolled back into a spool and stood erect in the corner. It was like those glasses, reading glasses which old ladies used to wear, attached to a cord that rolls onto a spindle in a neat case of unmarked gold; a spindle, a case, attached to the deep bosom of the mother of sleep.

He lay still, savoring this. Beneath him Rincon followed its fatal, secret, nightly pursuits, where upon the rich and inert darkness of the streets lighted windows and doors lay like oily strokes of broad and overlaid brushes. From the docks a ship's siren unsourced itself. For a moment it was sound, then it compassed silence, atmosphere, bringing upon the eartrums a vacuum in which nothing, not even silence, was. Then it ceased, ebbed; the silence breathed again with a clashing of palm fronds like sand hissing across a sheet of metal.

Still his skeleton lay motionless. Perhaps it was thinking about this and he thought of his tarred paper bed as a pair of spectacles through which he nightly perused the fabric of dreams:

Across the twin transparencies of the spectacles the horse still galloped with its tangled welter of tossing flames. Forward and back against the taut roundness of its belly its legs swung, rhythmically reaching and overreaching, each spurning overreach punctuated by a flick-

ing limberness of shod hooves. He can see the saddle-girth and the soles of the rider's feet in the stirrups. The girth cuts the horse in two just back of the withers, yet it still gallops with rhythmic and unflagging fury and without progression, and he thinks of that riderless Norman steed which galloped against the Saracen Emir, who, so keen of eye, so delicate and strong the wrist which swung the blade, severed the galloping beast at a single blow, the several halves thundering on in the sacred dust where him of Bouillon and Tancred too clashed in sullen retreat; thundering on through the assembled foes of our meek Lord, wrapped still in the fury and the pride of the charge, not knowing that it was dead.

The ceiling of the garret slanted in a ruined pitch to the low eaves. It was dark, and the body consciousness, assuming the office of vision, shaped in his mind's eye his motionless body grown phosphorescent with that steady decay which had set up within his body on the day of his birth, *the flesh is dead living on itself subsisting consuming itself thriftily in its own renewal will never die for I am the Resurrection and the Life* Of a man, the worm should be lusty, lean, hairdlover. Of women, of delicate girls briefly like heard music in tune, it should be suavely shaped, falling feeding into prettinesses, feeding, *what though to Me but as a seething of new milk Who am the Resurrection and the Life*

It was dark. The agony of wood was soothed by these latitudes; empty rooms did not creak and crack. Perhaps wood was like any other skeleton though, after a time, once reflexes of old compulsions had spent themselves. Bones might lie under seas, in the caverns of the sea, knocked together by the dying echoes of waves. Like bones of horses cursing the inferior riders who bestride them, bragging to one another about what they would have done with a first-rate rider up. But somebody always crucified the first-rate riders. And then it's better to be bones knocking together to the spent motion of falling tides in the caverns and the grottoes of the sea, *where him of Bouillon and Tancred too*

His skeleton groaned again. Across the twin transparencies of the glassy floor the horse still galloped, unflagging and without progress, its destination the barn where
(turn to page 59)

ILLUSTRATION BY L. LEWIS

STYLING BY KATIE KANE

the ANGEL and the RABBIT

Angelina sat on the bench in front of the tenement building and all night wistful youths gathered around her. Knuckles bumped her great pointed breasts, as if by accident. *Bony* knees nuzzled her soft thighs. Sly arms slipped invisibly behind her waist and landed low on broadly curved flesh.

Angelina shimmied on the bench, away from the bold hands. "I wanna talk," she pouted. "And that's all."

"Break down," begged a boy's voice from the hovering circle. "Everybody knows hubby's home once in a blue moon."

"Mind your business!" she snapped.

Sighs and murmurs unsettled the whole group. Boys began to file off, passing under the corner street lamp and merging into the darkness. *Don't go*, she wanted to say. *I'm so lonely*.

Sleepy heads rubbed their eyes and turned away. It was like a regular stampede. If only Matt would come home. And stay home, like a husband ought to. This hell-hole would seem heavenly again . . .

They were all gone except Bobby, sitting next to her. Bobby started to get up, slowly placing a hand for support on the fleshy part of her leg. She didn't mind his hand at all. Bobby was cute. And he hardly ever touched her and never sneaked a feel like the other boys.

"Stick around," Angelina urged. "There's no fire." The sex in her voice surprised and shocked her. Lately, it happened every time she spoke to Bobby.

"Man," Bobby said. "I gotta get me some sleep." He stepped up the street, passed under the street lamp and faded into the black.

Was she losing her looks? She straightened on the bench, pulled back her shoulders a bit and the divided masses of her bosom tipped skywards. Her hands slid down her sides caressing the opulent swell of her thighs. She was still like a bride. That's what her husband would find.

Tomorrow was the first and Matt almost always came home the first day of the month. Or maybe the day after . . . The yearning legs spread, then eased shut.

Rising, she swung her broad hips in a slow sad rhythm through the corridor of the tenement building and pushed open the door to her flat. She scurried to the oval wall mirror, gilt-rimmed and chipped, to see if there was a reason why Matt should not pay his visit.

With oblique eyes she reviewed the smooth dark skin that padded her face, the lips that were grandly full, the long black hair so shimmery. Matt would still want his monthly visit.

(turn to page 10)



Every fiber of her ached for the touch of her

husband — until she met Bobby

But when? Tomorrow? The day after? She'd have to spend tonight alone again. Spying a blouse lying in the middle of the scuffed linoleum, she toed it to the pile of dirty clothes by the bedroom door.

She ambled towards the kitchen, hips wagging in great circles, then stiffened and stopped.

Out in the corridor a familiar thud of footsteps sounded. A key jiggled in the lock of her door.

He flung open the door and strode into the center of the room, a huge, bulky, redheaded policeman gripping a battered valise in his red-hairy right paw.

"M-Matt!" said Angelina hoarsely. "You came early!" She clasped her hands against her belly and jumped up and down, as she had done as a little girl when frightened or excited, but now with the heavy bounce of big breasts.

He looked like fire to her. Tiny red hairs on the beefy face seemed ready to flame. The eyes burned at her.

The red giant in the blue uniform handed over his bag. "Want everything put away neat."

She took his traveling-bag by the handle, but the next instant he was tugging her towards the bedroom so furiously that her feet skimmed over the floor.

Garments flew in every direction as each stripped until they were completely naked. She was thrown onto the double bed. There was the collision of her soft flesh against this bear. The hulk enveloped her, pressed upon her and pounded at her with thunderous fury like large lightning crashing through a window and filling a room. One of his hands kept a grip on her breast, stretching and squeezing and funnelling it. He gave her breast a twist, but the pain was forgotten in the lovely releasing flood...

He went to sleep wrapping her in his arms, something he had never done before. She reveled in the warmth of his bulk.

Towards morning, she thought that maybe he was so lovey-dovey because he, too, for once, had gone without for a long time. Knowing him, she became sure of it. She rolled free, to the unoccupied side of the double bed, laughter sticking like a claw in her throat.

Matt rose early and ate heartily. He spoke not a word to her.

He dressed in dungarees and a T-shirt, grabbed an old bat and sped out the door. Angelina followed him.

The morning sun glistened off red hair as the flabby slugger stood on the sidewalk and walloped the air with his homerun hitter. Angelina leaned in the doorway of the corridor, watching Matt and hoping that sooner or later he'd talk to her.

The sun silvered the cobblestone street and brightened the dingy tenement buildings. Angelina preened, flaunting a round of hip at him, jutting out her breasts. He continued to worry the air with his bat. It was the same old story. Once he had had her, he paid no mind. She was so alone, as lonely as if he weren't here.

She loosened to a slouch in the doorway, until she saw Bobby walking towards them. She turned and swelled every luscious curve of her body, to keep Bobby from abandoning her.

"Hi, baby." Bobby strutted to a halt before her, a swagger even in the way his slim sixteen years stood still: or maybe it was the cocky grin or the forward slant of his skinny hips in the pleated trousers.

"Baby gonna be on the bench tonight?" Still grinning flirtatiously.

Angelina giggled. Matt, with the bat flexed over his fat shoulder, eyed an imaginary pitcher, but she saw the scowl on his face.

"Bobby, my husband, Matt."

"Hi," Bobby said.

Matt posed, a silent statue in a batter's stance.

"Gonna miss you tonight, baby," Bobby drawled.

Angelina roared, then quieted until her laughter was more ladylike. Bobby was so silly and so cute and so much fun. She wished Matt were good company.

"Hey, kid," grunted Matt. He tipped the bat and leaned on it like a cane. "Get a ball. And I'll knock you a few grounders. On the corner lot."

Bobby simply stared at him. His eyes seemed to take in Matt's paunch and the creased jowls. Watching Bobby survey Matt, and seeing him through the boy's eyes, Angelina could not help but think that her husband was an old fool acting like a child.

"Naw, man," Bobby said.

Matt flushed. "Beat it, then."

"What for? I'm not—"

"I'll run ya in."

"That's right, man. Forgot you were a cop."

Bobby wheeled in a dancelike caper, tossed a hand in the air, jerked a comical look over his shoulder and said, "Bye, bye, baby. Bob must go."

Angelina bubbled laughter despite herself. "Stick around, Bobby. Matt—"

She clicked her teeth together and let Bobby strut away. Matt's face was twisted in a red rage. The tiny red hairs on his cheeks bristled like quills.

Swinging the bat at his side, he stamped across the pavement. She saw the swish of his arm too late to avoid the stinging slap.

"Oh! Oh!" She collapsed on the doorsill, holding her face and weeping.

"Never make a fool out of me," Matt's voice growled from above her.

She was busy with her tears and the sobs that shook her. Slowly she put down the spasmodic jerking of her body and stopped crying. Wiping her face dry with her handkerchief, she peeped up.

Matt stood in his old position on the sidewalk, bat on his shoulder, rump out, tensing to hit an imaginary homerun.

She weaved erect in the doorway. She'd show him.

"I'm—I'm gonna divorce you!" she cried.

"Haw!" Matt let the bat tilt off his shoulder and shuffled towards her.

She cringed, then mustered courage. "I'm looking for a job tomorrow. Earn my own living. Divorce you!"

"Haw!"

He trudged past her, through the corridor and disappeared into her apartment. Maybe it'd be hard, she thought, to find a job. But there had to be a way to get even. There had to be a way to get out of this miserable rut she was in. She thought and thought.

Emerging a half hour later in full uniform, ready to go on duty, Matt handed her some bills. "Rent money," he said. "And something to eat on."

She took the money. "Guess I'm a kept woman," she

remarked. "Couldn't get a woman without marrying her and keeping her."

The anger in his eyes told her that her quip had hit home. But he smiled, chuckled her under the chin and said, "Still gonna divorce me?"

"Yes."

He smirked, jabbed her a playful prod in the stomach that left her gasping and marched off.

You'll see, she told him silently. There's more than one way to skin a fat old blubbery cat.

The whole day she dreamed of methods of skinning the cat. Lights and shades of night shadowed her on the bench, pale and nervous and with a plan.

Bobby approached leading two other boys under the fuzzy beam of the street lamp. They spotted her and Bobby bolted from them. He lunged to her side, plopped down and forced her to the end of the bench so that he had the only seat next to her.

Phil, the beanpole, arrived next and glared angrily, so Bobby shoved him, tripping over his own long legs. Alex sauntered before them like a shy cherub, still with the pink skin of a baby, and Bobby teased him by feinting him off balance.

These maneuvers amused Angelina and she relaxed and gathered the nerve to put her plan into operation. Turning, she rubbed one large breast slowly across Bobby's biceps.

"Ha, ha," Bobby said. "Somebody wasn't watching herself!"

Angelina pressed forward and crushed her breast against his arm. Two vague forms darkened over their fused bodies. Phil and Alex huddled over them with sharp intakings of breath.

Bobby shrugged back to normal brashness. "Watch it, baby. Or you know what."

"What?" She giggled.

Bobby shrank. *He looks like a rabbit, a cute bunny*, Angelina thought. She wondered why she had never noticed it before, but that face, so compact, with the nostrils that trembled now, and the pink tongue flicking nervously over his lips—*my pretty, handsome rabbit!*

He inched away and puffed out his chest, safely out of contact with her. Angelina immediately closed the distance, cradling his arm between the yielding flesh of her bosom.

"Look, baby," Bobby said. "Stop messing around . . ."

She barely heard his voice. She felt hot and excited. The touch of his young firm body was even better than she had imagined.

"... because Daddy will spank," Bobby warned.

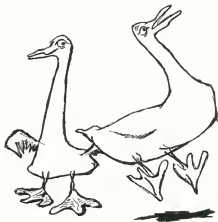
"Well?" She chuckled deep in her throat.

Overhead a sigh sighed, and tall Phil urged, "Well, go ahead, Daddy!"

"Yeah," squeaked Alex. "Watcha waiting for, Daddy?"

The shadows of the boys mottled Bobby's face, but even by the dim light of the street lamp she could see his very serious expression. In a flash he tumbled her over his knee.

The first blows smacked loud and hard, burning and swelling and numbing. She stretched back an arm to fend for the hilled flesh, wondering what she had gotten her-



self into. Her arm was thrust away. But then Bobby's hand fell limply upon her as if he had grown halfhearted about this affair.

She felt the back of her skirt rumpling up and lots of hands tickling upwards and sliding under, pressing, patting and grabbing. That would be Alex and Phil, she thought. One of them tugged her panties to her knees.

Hands pounced anew upon her nakedness, rubbing and rolling over the firmly rounded quarters, slipping between the soft spreadeagled thighs and clutching. She was sure it was the work of Phil and Alex. For a brief second she let them handle her because it felt good.

Turning on Bobby's legs, she slapped their hands away and retrieved her panties. She rose, pressing against Bobby's hard thighs, letting her own hands get some choice licks in there, and sat upon the bench.

"You boys are bad!" She wagged a finger at Alex and Phil, who hung their heads.

Tugging gently at Bobby's arm, she urged, "Come on. Let's leave these bad boys. Let's have some coffee."

She almost laughed at the way Bobby stumbled after her, as if in a trance. Alex and Phil yelped and dashed towards them. She dragged Bobby into her apartment and slammed the door in the faces of the other boys, turning the latch.

"Sit on my nice green sofa?" she suggested.

As Bobby, still hypnotized, offered no opinion, she led him to the sofa and pulled him down beside her. A thumping on the door and a rattling of the knob told her that Alex and Phil had not yet surrendered to what had to be.

She shook Bobby. "Chase them away. Else they'll peep in and tell lies about us."

Bobby blinked to life and walked with measured strides to the door. Opening it, he swung his fists against the jaws of the surprised boys. They hollered, scampered away, cursed from the distance and then all was empty silence in the corridor.

(turn to page 64)

FROM GARRET TO RUNWAY

One of Paris' most colorful Bohemian traditions—shown here for the first time

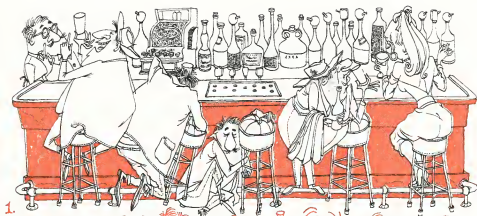
Each year the male citizenry of the 14th *arrondissement* (district) of Paris gather in public conclave for a special treat: selecting the ideal artist's model.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN DANE

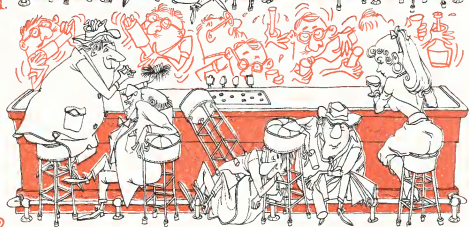


Twelve to fifteen contestants are nominated by the neighborhood's painters and sculptors. The *atelier* lovelies parade before the discerning eyes of the crowd, and the judges, with due consideration for audience reaction, pick the winner.

Poise, grace, and artistically perfect dimensions are what the judges look for. To make their job easier, each girl sports a card displaying her number and a minute triangular loincloth. Strictly, you might say, a case of art for art's sake.



1.



2.



3.

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD WING

You may think you have a wooden leg—but try
filling it with donqua, soma, chi-chi, or arrack

DRINKS THAT HAVE KNOCKED ME DOWN

I walked into a famous downtown bar and there on the wall was a wonderful new price list: "Arrack," it said, "20 cents per dram; Abyssinian beer (*soma*, *tallah*, or *donqua*) 10, 12, and 15 cents per half-pint respectively; Hindu *soma* (the original intoxicant of the human race), 75 cents per glass; Mexican *pulque*, 20 cents per teaspoonful (that's all you'll need); Kamchatka birch wine, 25 cents; Patagonian *chi-chi* (autumn brew) 12 cents; Caucasus *kephir*, 50 cents per nip; Mongolian *konmiss*, 60 cents per half-pint."

Of course, I was dreaming. And I was dreaming because the night before I had spent a nebulous evening with four rugged Navy boys who had shared the same ship with me during the war. Profoundly discussed for six convivial hours had been the subject: "Drinks that have knocked us down."

Strange thing was, we agreed, that nobody had been knocked down by any of the alcoholic concoctions normally offered to the public in this country. The really fashionable stuff appeared to be almost entirely the product of people one would normally regard as abysmally unversed in the preparation of Bacchanalian brews.

Take Abyssinian beer, for instance, which is siphoned off in three strengths. *Soma* is mild, and three glasses of it merely thickens your speech. *Tallah* is medium, and



article . . . PAUL BROCK

(turn to page 62)

Eric Mott was feeling much better. He had been in Los Angeles only a week, but with plenty of rest and a good diet, he had gained back seven of the ten pounds that Tina had wrested from him. Six feet and three inches is a lot of woman, even in Texas, and Tina operated on the idea that if one pill made you feel better, you should take the whole bottle and never be sick again. It was, Eric decided, a misleading philosophy.

Of course Tina had gone wild over the Hydrogen Bomb, which is how Eric referred to his newly discovered method of doing things. Once Tina had accustomed her spine to that unusual position, she had adapted beautifully. But a man can stand just so much.

Eric lounged on the terrace overlooking the street, counting the women who came along the avenue, jiggling, obviously not wearing brassieres. It occurred to Eric that underwear sales in California must be at an all-time low. The totals stood at twenty without, four probables,

and seven with, when he heard a bear-like roar and turned to see a dumpy little man with a moustache, sport shirt, slacks, and dark glasses charging toward him.

"Eric Mott!" the man shouted. "I haven't seen you in years."

The pudgy man took his hand and shook it vigorously as a woman passed below. Eric glanced quickly. "Twenty-one," he said aloud so he wouldn't forget.

The little man removed his glasses and Eric recognized Hal Winters, an old friend of the family, who had become a movie producer. "Twenty-one what?" Hal asked, looking around him.

"Women without brassieres. I've been counting them. You see, the percentage..."

"You've been counting them?" Incredulously.

"Yes. I was just..."

Hal Winters' expression gave him away. Of course, (turn to page 18)



ERIC MOTT IN HOLLYWOOD

Let's ... BOB BRISTOW



ILLUSTRATED BY BILL HOFMANN

they had always thought Eric Mott an odd one, and there were some few reputable psychiatrists who insisted he was insane, but others disagreed and . . .

"Well," Hal said, frowning, "it doesn't matter. I'm glad you're here. Have you heard about our new picture?"

"Our picture?" Eric asked.

"Yes . . . ours. You invested a hundred thousand in it." A pause. "Eric, are you well?"

Eric couldn't remember investing a hundred thousand dollars. It must have been done by his lawyers. He seldom read the papers they sent him to sign because they were always worded in that idiotic legal phraseology and . . .

"Yes, yes," Eric said, sipping his drink, "how did the picture turn out?"

"A smash. It will be an absolute smash!"

"Fine," Eric said, patting Hal's arm. "Nothing like an absolute smash, I always say." No women were moving along the walk, but Eric glanced occasionally.

"I'm having a party at my place this weekend for the cast. You've got to come."

"Twenty-two," Eric said, turning briefly.

Hal glanced at the street below and nodded. "Twenty-two." Soberly, then with returning enthusiasm: "Got plenty of room, a pool, five-hole golf course, view of the Pacific, and the star is Sylvania Salvini. How would you like to meet that, Eric, boy?"

Eric wouldn't have known Sylvania Salvini from Zasu Pitts, but he smiled. It was getting a little tiresome just sitting about gaining strength. "I'd like that," he said, and Hal winked wickedly.

"I knew you would. Of course, we bill her as Italian, but she spent most of her life in the Bronx. She looks Italian and we don't have to teach her to speak English . . . anyway, not much of it."

Eric turned quickly, almost too late. "Uh . . . eight," he said. But number eight drooped so badly she didn't have much choice.

"I'll leave the directions at the desk. See you tonight," Hal said. Eric nodded, opened a jar, took two vitamin pills and washed them down with the drink.

The party was in full swing when Eric arrived. He was taken upstairs. At the top of the stairs, a lengthy hallway led both to the left and the right. There were six bedrooms at each end of the hall. Eric's room was the third from the left. He put his clothes away and went downstairs.

Hal was working his way across the crowded floor toward him. Eric paused. There must have been seventy-five people there and most of them were already tipsy. In fact, most of them were drunk. Couples stood in the middle of the floor kissing each other, not moving to the music of the small orchestra. Eric shrugged. He had never seen people drink like this in his life. Even in Texas they didn't drink like this. It seemed like a race to see who could pass out first, but as Eric glanced about the room, he noticed the chap over in the corner. The race had already been won. Hal reached him.

"Eric, boy," he said, giggling foolishly as he stepped over a couple who had sat down on the floor. "Glad you could make it."

"Thank you," Eric said. "It's a very nice party."

"Come on," Hal said, "I'll introduce you around."

Eric followed him down the stairway. Hal apparently overlooked the lesser stars.

"Here's Mary Mitchell, you remember her from *Westward the Wench*. Oh, Mary . . ." Hal led Eric out on the terrace. Eric noticed Mary Mitchell in a rather awkward position against the rock wall. A man hovered over her amorously. "Mary," Hal said, "I'd like you to meet Eric Mott. And this is Mary's husband . . . Oh . . . ha ha . . . no, this is Abel Harley."

The two somehow became untwined briefly. Mary Mitchell swayed slightly, wrapped her arms about Eric and kissed him passionately, while Abel Harley stood unconcernedly by. Eric separated himself and nodded. "How do you do?" he said. Mary Mitchell nodded pleasantly and found Abel Harley again and they resumed where they had left off.

Hal led Eric away, laughing. "Isn't that a laugh? For a moment I thought that was her husband. Ha! Ha!"

Eric smiled. A light glowed dimly beside the swimming pool.

"I think that is Shirley Stephens," Hal said, leading Eric to the large lounge chair. "Shirley," Hal said . . . and then the light filtered down on Shirley and some fellow who were obviously too busy to be bothered with introductions. "Well," Hal explained, "we'll catch them later."

They moved back to the terrace and Hal nudged Eric's ribs with a pointed elbow.

"There she is . . . there is Sylvania Salvini." Hal pulled him across the terrace where Miss Salvini and her escort were standing very close. The man had his arms around Miss Salvini, rather low on the waist, and . . . well, it really wasn't her waist, but . . . "Sylvania," Hal said, "I want you to meet Eric Mott. He invested in our picture."

Sylvania disengaged herself and smiled. She was not a tall woman, but very well proportioned. In fact, her proportions were almost phenomenal. She wore a low-cut thing, and when she breathed, which she was doing expertly, her bosom threatened all-out war against the dress. She also didn't wear any . . . "Twenty-three," Eric said under his breath.

Miss Salvini had very nice hips and the dress outlined her legs plainly. She was dark complexioned, and her eyes smouldered with passion. "How do you do?" she said, weaving slightly. When her hand touched his, Eric felt an almost electric sensation.

"And this is Felix Gerard, the hero in our little production," Hal said. Then to Felix: "Sorry your wife couldn't make it."

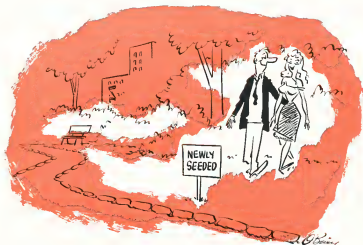
"Yes . . ." Thickly. "Yes, it's a pity," Felix said. He was medium height, slim build, dark hair.

"Well," Eric said, "you were busy . . . go right ahead. We were just passing by."

Sylvania Salvini thought that for some reason to be amusing. She laughed, swayed, hiccupped, and Felix Gerard drew her close once again.

Eric and Hal left. "You go ahead, Hal," Eric said, taking a drink, "I'll just move around." He sipped the drink.

Inside a large group of people began singing in mad-



dening off-tones. Near the corner of the room behind a group of palm trees, Eric heard a shrill feminine laugh, and recognized the lines from a recent Academy Award-winning movie.

"What do you want to do tonight?" a man's voice said.

"What do you want to do?" the woman giggled.

"No, what do you want to do?" he repeated.

Eric peered around the palm tree, turned away and took a large part of the drink. The conversation, apparently, was a jest. They were already doing it.

A tall woman, vaguely reminiscent of Tina, grabbed him by the arm and began swinging him about in some sort of dance. When she swung him loose, Eric reeled across the room, the woman fell down, and Eric padded quietly on his way.

This, Eric thought, is a madhouse. Never in all his life had he seen such an odd, fiercely uninhibited group of people. He took another drink and stepped out on the terrace again. He leaned over the rock wall, trying to get a breath of fresh air when he heard the velvet voice of Miss Salvini just on the other side of a small hedge. Miss Salvini, he noted, was pretty well loaded at this time and was leaning rather heavily on Felix Gerard. They spoke softly.

"You go up to your room first," Miss Salvini said breathlessly, "and I'll mix around for a while before I come up."

Felix Gerard patted her on the tight dress. "Okay, baby," he said, hiccupping. "We wouldn't want the little wife to get wise. Ha ha."

Felix Gerard weaved away and went inside. In a few moments, Miss Salvini followed. Eric smiled. Hollywood was quite the place, he thought. In a few minutes he finished his drink and went inside. He saw Miss Salvini kissing several people who sort of lined up for the event. Warming up exercise, Eric assumed.

The party had reached hurricane proportions. It was too much for him. Eric went upstairs, closed the door and went to bed. He thought that if Hal had filmed the party, instead of the picture, it would have made a lot more money. Then he began to dream. At first his dream was about a horse nudging him on the shoulder with its cool nose. In a few moments he felt the horse pressing closer, almost shoving him out of bed. The horse was biting his shoulder now, and he stirred.

"Darling," the horse whispered, "you fell asleep."

Eric came awake rather suddenly, and it really wasn't

(turn over)

a horse at all. Somebody was in bed with him. His senses returned quickly. He felt along the contours to determine the sex of this thing, as in California one can never be certain. It was female. Eric coughed. "Ahem," he cleared his voice. He felt a warm hand cover his mouth.

"Quiet, darling," she said in her velvet whisper. "You don't want to have people coming in here. We'll have to whisper."

"Oh," Eric whispered. The woman giggled softly and kissed him. He felt her breath coming in hurried gasps. Then she rolled away. In the very faint light from the window Eric could make out the outline of Miss Salvini.

"I nearly never remember the right room," she whispered, finding it difficult to suppress a giggle. Eric was having somewhat the same trouble. Miss Salvini was tugging at a zipper, having a rough time of it. Finally she managed and the dress opened up like a morning glory and slipped to the floor. Immediately Miss Salvini was again beside him, holding his face and kissing him feverishly.

Eric was concerned with a problem of ethics which was quite strange to him. The point was, should he tell Miss Salvini that she was in the wrong room? Or should he simply proceed as though it was like she thought it was?

This turned out to be a more complex problem than he had at first anticipated, particularly with Miss Salvini pressing disturbingly close to him, kissing his face and everything.

There was the possibility that she was not in the wrong room, and if Eric brought up the subject, Miss Salvini might think him such an unresponsive and unappreciative person as to leave, which Eric didn't really want at this point. Also, since he had invested a hundred thousand dollars in the picture, perhaps Hal had thought this would be a nice gesture. Eric was undecided. On the other hand, even if Miss Salvini thought she was in Felix Gerard's room, he might be doing her and Felix Gerard a favor, as Mrs. Gerard, at home and unaware of the rather close understanding between the stars of the picture, might really be just the woman for Felix Gerard and the less he saw of Miss Salvini, particularly in this position, the better chances his marriage had to succeed.

This, Eric admitted was a weak argument, but the moment of decision had come. Perhaps Miss Salvini would be so embarrassed to learn that she was in the wrong room that she would flee and bring about the ruin of her reputation and her career. Everyone considered, Eric decided that it was his duty as a gentleman to proceed without alarming Miss Salvini, Felix Gerard, Mrs. Gerard, Hal, or anyone else. Eric made the sacrifice.

Miss Salvini responded furiously to his activities. "Ummmmmmmm," she whispered, "you never acted this way before. Ummmmmmmm. I like it."

From this, Eric knew for certain that Miss Salvini had made a mistake. But since it had come up this way, Eric decided it was a very poor time to explain, besides, Miss Salvini seemed to be enjoying herself. Eric's mind became suddenly stimulated with the idea that he should, since this was already forced upon him, show Miss Salvini the Hydrogen Bomb. It would be only fair, he

thought, to compensate for her mistake.

"I know," he whispered, "this new idea. . ."

"Ummmmmmmmmm."

"Would you like . . . I mean. . ."

"Ummmmmmmmmm!"

Eric explained the Hydrogen Bomb as best he could in a low whisper. Miss Salvini listened for a moment, apparently getting the idea.

"Oh . . . I've never heard of anything like that," she whispered.

Eric explained the position once again and Miss Salvini assumed it. Miss Salvini's rather tipsy condition brought about cause for some amusement. But shortly, these things were overcome and Eric illustrated the Bomb with such enthusiasm that Miss Salvini squealed delightfully. Then, when the Bomb exploded, Miss Salvini nearly wrenched her back.

The peace descended slowly.

"Darling," Miss Salvini whispered, "that is the most. That is the very most most," she said.

Eric smiled. It was nice to please the folks.

Miss Salvini took his hand and kissed it, felt Eric's large ring . . . paused, gasped, felt the ring again, gasped loudly, jumped from the bed, reached the lamp, turned it on, and gasped.

Eric looked at the fully exposed Miss Salvini and he nearly gasped himself because Miss Salvini was certainly the genuine article.

"You," she screamed in a whisper, "you have taken me."

Eric defended himself. "No," he said, "I was sleeping very soundly when this horse. . ."

Eric had not pronounced the word quite as carefully as he should have and Miss Salvini's face turned nearly purple with rage.

"You," she exploded, "have the nerve to do this to me and then call me a whore. A common. . ." Loudly now.

"I said horse. You see, I was dreaming. . ."

Miss Salvini was dressing, which didn't take very long except that she had trouble again with the zipper. "I should have you arrested," she cried. "I should have you arrested for rape."

Miss Salvini had spoken too loudly. The word "rape" in Hollywood can often be heard, even when spoken softly, at amazing distances. The door burst open. Miss Salvini was dressed, shouting at Eric.

"Eric," Hal said angrily, "you have abused my hospitality." And turning to Miss Salvini, "Are you all right, my dear?"

Miss Salvini went into an Award-winning performance. "Yes . . . yes, I'm all right now," she sobbed deeply, tears flowing. "I understand," she said a little drunkenly, still somewhat weak from the activity of the Hydrogen Bomb, "that Mr. Mott has invested heavily in our picture. I know if this gets out, how he attacked me, how he tried to abuse me," Miss Salvini was rubbing her back with a rather idiotic expression on her face, "that we will be ruined. So . . . I'll be a good sport. I'll not file charges. It's because of the other members of the cast that I do this. I don't want them to have to bear the shame and the failure of the picture and the ugly headlines. . ."

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THE MAGIC TOUCH

In photographer Zoltan Gloss' London studio, a magic transformation takes place: a pretty, kittenish young girl (see below) is transformed into a seductive, unforgettably womanly vision.

By utilizing a celebrated Henry Moore sculpture of a family group, Gloss creates an unforgettable portfolio—a haunting work of beauty and of tempting loveliness.





Here is the result of Zoltan Gloss' painstaking efforts—another of his masterworks of camero magic.

Jose Fuentes was nothing but a cheap club fighter. But he held his own private, whacky vision of glory

He always used to stand at the entrance of the Grand Street gymnasium, a little yellow man in an immaculate white suit, white Panama hat, white shoes, white tie. This was Jose Fuentes.

If you remember him at all, and you must be an old-timer at the fight clubs if you do, you remember a tough little Mexican kid with a wild left hook, weak on brains but strong on heart. Young Pancho Villa the Third, he used to call himself. No champion, never in the big money, just another one of the kids who come along for a while, who only know how to throw roundhouse punches with either hand and to bounce up after a knockdown without bothering to take their count and get their wind. The kind the fans go crazy about for a year or two and then don't recognize when they're buying peanuts or papers from them outside the stadium a year or two later.

Club fighters, they're called, a dime a dozen, easy to hit and hard to hurt. At least, hard to knock out. Plenty of hurt, sure, plenty of pain, but that all comes later, when they can't seem to get fights any more, when they start hanging around the gym. Not training, not working, just sort of hanging around.

Now there are plenty of bums hanging around the gym every day in the week. A bum is any boxer who thinks he's going to be on Easy Street when he hangs up his gloves, and winds up on Silly Avenue instead. After that, they just hang around. They hang around waiting for another break, another manager, or a chance to pick up two or three dollars a round sparring with somebody's prospect, or a job as a second, or to put the bite on an old friend or a cocky youngster who wants to feel like a big shot. The gym is the only place they know, so all they can do is hang around and hope to make a dollar.

But no one ever hung around like Young Pancho Villa the Third. Young Pancho went into the occupation of hanging around the gym as if it were a serious and respectable profession. None of this sitting around all day on the long wooden benches with your legs stretched out in front of you as if life were one long rest period between rounds. No loitering for a man who calls himself

Young Pancho Villa the Third, in honor of the Indian guerrilla whom the *compañeros* in the *cantinas* still sing that *corrido* about. And his valiant little namesake who lost his flyweight championship in a San Francisco ring, and, some hours later, his life in a San Francisco hospital. No panhandling for a man with a name like that. No, Young Pancho Villa the Third had a vision. He was going to get somewhere in the world. He was going to be an announcer.

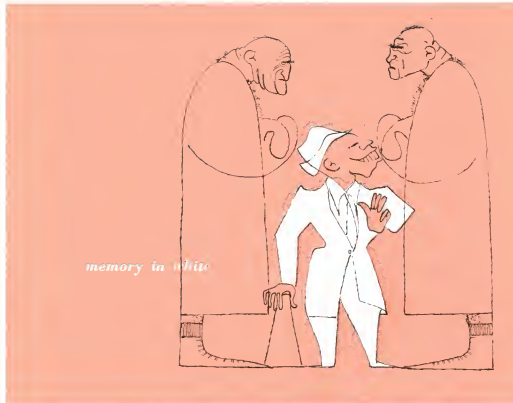
For it was a funny thing, whenever he tried to think back to his days in the ring, all those fights, even that high point in his career, that main event at the Legion when Pete Sarmiento had him down nine times but couldn't put him away, all those beatings, all those rounds, all those punches he threw and the ones he caught, the whole thing seemed to run together. He would start thinking how it was in that tenth round against Sarmiento, hanging on to Pete to keep from going down, and instead he would be hanging onto Frankie Grandetta, or was it Baby Arizmendi? The memories kept spilling and running together.

There was only one memory that stood out sharply, refusing to blend with the others. It was a memory in white, the memory of a man in a very white suit, a very important man with a megaphone who used to climb through the ropes while Young Pancho and his opponent were sitting in their corners, and say in a very important voice to which everybody listened in respectful silence, "Lay-deez and gen-tle-men."

A white suit, a megaphone and everybody listening. That was the vision. Young Pancho Villa the Third, the stocky little Mex with a child's face hammered flat as an English bulldog's, walked down Main Street in pursuit of a vision, a white-linen, double-breasted vision that floated ahead of him, leading him past the burleycue houses and the pool parlors, the nickel flophouses, the dime flophouses and the exclusive clean-sheets-every-week two-bit flophouses, leading him past the saloons with their threadbare elegance, the gaudy jukeboxes, the

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ILLUSTRATED BY AL WEST



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gaudy and threadbare B-girls, past all those wonderful and tempting ways to spend his money. But Young Pancho kept his thick little hands in his pockets until he came to Manny (Nothing Over Five Dollars) Liebowitz' High Class Clothing Store for Men.

None of the other guys who hung around the gym were getting any gold stars on their report cards for neatness. Most of them wore suits that looked as if they had been used to mop up the floors of Happy Harry's saloon on the corner. So Pancho was going to be smart. Pancho was going to look like class if it cost him a fortune. That suit in the window, for instance, that brand-new white linen suit, that was for Pancho. "Five Dollars," a large card pinned to the coat beckoned to Pancho. "Five Dollars," said another on the pants.

"I take suit in window," Pancho said.

"Wudja say, *amigo*?" asked Mr. Liebowitz.

Pancho's voice was husky and his words bumped against one another. Too many collisions between his brain and someone else's fist had thickened his natural accent to an almost inarticulate jargon. "Punch-patter," some of the boys described it.

"I take suit in window," Pancho said, pointing a short, chunky finger at the one he wanted.

"And what a bargain!" Mr. Liebowitz began. "In all of Los Angeles show me another genuine linen for ten dollars."

"Ten dollars?" said Pancho. "In window it say only five."

"Five dollars," said Mr. Liebowitz agreeably. "Sure, five dollars. Five for the coat and five for the pants. Just like it says in the window."

Pancho went out into the street and gazed at the suit again. He pressed his nose against the window and then stepped back and appraised it like a connoisseur studying a work of art. It was so beautiful. It was so white and so dapper. For a luxury maybe ten dollars was awfully steep. But this was no luxury. This was an investment. This was the uniform Young Pancho Villa the Third would need in his chosen profession.

"You have my size?" he said. "Must fit very good."

"Don't take my word for it," said Mr. Liebowitz. "My motto is Suit Yourself. Suit—Yourself. Get it?"

The suit might have been a good fit when Pancho was still making the featherweight limit. But he was almost a middleweight now and the coat button strained against his belly, the seat of his pants stretched skin-tight across his rump.

"Ugh, too tight," Pancho gasped. "Got him bigger?"

"Bigger?" said Mr. Liebowitz. "You want to be in style, don't you? That is just the way the college boys are wearing them this season. Just off the campus from UCLA!"

Young Pancho Villa the Third looked over his shoulder into the mirror. Not so bad at that. Nice and form-fitting. Not soiled and baggy like the pants on those bums around the gym.

Then he tried on the shoes. Pointed white shoes with special heels built up, almost like a girl's. "Those are absolutely genuine imitation buck," Mr. Liebowitz explained. "Marked down from four-fifty to one-ninety-nine."

Young Pancho Villa the Third walked down Main

Street in his white linen suit, a clean shirt, a white cotton tie, genuine imitation-buck shoes and a Panama hat worn at a rakish angle over one eye. The outfit had set him back thirteen ninety-nine, nearly all the money he had, but it was worth it. Then he went into a pawnshop and asked to look at megaphones. "I want biggest megaphone you got in place," he said.

The pawnbroker handed a bulky, battered megaphone over the counter.

"Now I am fight announcer," Young Pancho announced. He caressed the megaphone, raised it to his lips and shouted excitedly, "Een-tro-duc-ing Young Pancho Villa the Third, the cham-peen announcer of the worrrrrrrd!"

The first day Pancho showed up at the gym in his new role he got his money's worth out of that megaphone. When he put it to his mouth, he lifted his head and closed his eyes like a concert artist. He stood there in the corner by the entrance shouting his announcements into that megaphone, thrilled with the sound of the beautiful deep voice that rose from his lips like organ music. Or at least, so it seemed to him, as he paused to listen to it reverberating through the big, high-ceilinged room full of serious boys with narrow waists and glistening skins, bending, stretching, skipping, shadow-boxing, punching the bags or listening earnestly to the instructions of men with fat bellies, boneless noses, ulcers, dirty sweatshirts, brown backs pushed back from sweaty foreheads, the trainers, the managers, the experts.

In the center ring Ceferino Garcia, the Pride of the Islands, was throwing punches at the air, ducking and weaving as he crowded an imaginary opponent to the ropes.

Young Pancho Villa the Third held his megaphone high and shouted, "Een-tro-duc-ing, one hon-dred and sexxy pounds, that tareefic boy from the Phil-happens . . ."

He spread his legs and bellowed. He was the greatest announcer in the world. Only nobody could understand him. The accent and a speech motor sputtering along on half its cylinders produced a kind of guttural doubletalk. Eddie Gibbs, the bald, irritable little guy who ran the gym, went over to Pancho and said, "What do you think you're doing?"

"Me announce," Pancho said. "Me announce very fine. Work here in gym every day."

"Go on," Gibbs said. "What the hell is there to announce around here? You're punchy."

That was a fighting word and Pancho felt the blood rush to his head. Anger brought his thick lips to a child-like pout. "Ponchy. Who ponchy? Me no ponchy. Those boms over there, maybe they ponchy. Me have job. Me announcer."

Jerry La Pan, who had the best string of boys in town, stopped to listen on his way in. Jerry was a great ribber and he worked at it all the time. He flipped Pancho four bits and said, "That's for the commercial. I wanna buy the next fifteen minutes."

Pancho raised his megaphone solemnly. "Een-tro-duc-ing, Jerry La Pan, that great non-ager of that coming heavyweight chom-peen . . ."

All the boys got a bang out of that, so Gibbs let Pancho

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"She's built different."

hang around for laughs. After the third day it didn't seem so funny anymore, not even to Jerry La Pan, but Pancho went right on announcing. He couldn't have been more conscientious about it if Gibbs had put him on the payroll. Every day Pancho would check in at noon, announce until two, take half an hour off for lunch and go back to his megaphone again until the last tired fighter hit the showers at six.

He was something of a genius in his own way. He could keep up a steady stream of announcements for six hours and succeed in saying nothing that anybody could understand. He kept it up so long that after a while the sound of his voice seemed to blend into the other sounds that made the rhythm of the place—the slapping of the small bag, the thudding of the big, the clicking of the jump ropes, and the rumbling of the canvas-covered boards under the weight of the boxers' dancing feet.

The first few days, all the boys thought the announcing was the funniest thing they ever saw. Then, when they were running low on wisecracks, they began to pretend he wasn't there. And finally they didn't have to pretend anymore. Pancho and his white suit and megaphone were on the job all day long and no one even bothered to look around.

No one, that is, but Soldier Conlon. The Soldier was one of those characters who used to do a little boxing and has nothing to show for it but a couple of cauliflower ears and a cauliflower brain. After hanging up his gloves,

he worked the corners for a couple of years, but one of the fights he worked looked so wrong that the commission had to take somebody's license away to save its face, and, of course, the Soldier was their man.

So now the Soldier just hung around, as the boys say, making himself useless. If he got hold of a couple of bucks he picked up a hand in one of the poker games in the back room. If things got so bad that he had to go to work, he'd promote himself a little dough, finding tankers for some new bum they were trying to build up. The Soldier was never what the boys call a vicious character. He didn't have the guts or the brains to kill somebody or rob a bank. The Soldier was strictly alley-fighting and two-bit larceny.

Soldier Conlon would have been just another Grand Street hanger-onner, if it hadn't been for one thing. His sense of humor. Especially where Young Pancho Villa the Third was concerned. For instance it didn't take him any time at all to find what a nut Pancho was on the subject of keeping his white outfit spotless. So every time Soldier Conlon would come into the gym he'd stick his hand out and say, "Hiya, Pancho, how's the kid today?" And when he drew his hand back there would be a big black smudge on Pancho's sleeve where the Soldier had drawn the end of a burnt match across it with the other hand.

And when Pancho finally got wise to the hand-shaking gag, the Soldier would come by and say, "Glad to see ya puttin' your best foot forward, Pancho, old boy!" and he'd stamp on Pancho's white imitation-buck shoes, leaving a dirty smear across the toe.

After a while it got so that every time Pancho saw Conlon coming he'd run for the high stool near the entrance and draw up his feet and wrap his arms around himself and pull in his head like a turtle. "Stay 'way, stay 'way now," Pancho would plead. And the Soldier's answer would be a grin, showing wide orange gums and a mouth full of cheap store teeth. "Whatsa matter, Pancho? We pals, ain't we, Pancho o' kid, o' kid?" Then he'd turn around and wink at whoever happened to be standing around, to make sure they were getting the joke.

One day Eddie Gibbs decided to put on an amateur boxing show. As soon as Pancho heard about it he got all excited and ran up to Gibbs' office. "Missa Geebs," he said, "You put on beeg show, you need a-numma-one announcer."

Well, at first Gibbs told Pancho what to do with his megaphone. But Pancho kept hollering until finally Gibbs began to see the possibilities of it. Young Pancho Villa the Third, the greatest doubletalk announcer in the world. The louder he talked, the less you understood. They could throw him in once in a while just for laughs. So Gibbs said, "Sure, Pancho. You're in. I'll even put your name in the program."

There was no holding Pancho after that. He strutted around the gym like a bantam rooster. He was announcing everything that went on in a very impressive and inarticulate way. The boys said he even announced when Eddie Gibbs took a leak.

But the day before the amateur show, the boxers had to struggle along without their announcing. "How about givin' up with some of them announcements, Pancho?" Soupy Jones, the colored lightweight, laughed.



"They seem to be healing nicely, don't they?"

"Is better to save voice for beeg show tomorrow night," Pancho explained.

The next afternoon Pancho didn't show up at the gym at all. He was lying down in his room resting for his personal appearance. He left a call at the desk for seven o'clock.

"Get up yourself, you bum," said the manager. Pancho was three weeks behind in his rent.

At seven o'clock, Pancho rose, tested his megaphone, and went down to the end of the hall to wash his hands so he wouldn't leave any dirty fingerprints on his clothes. He had washed and ironed his white shirt, chalked his shoes, and had given the Chinaman down the street a buck to clean and press the suit and block his Panama hat.

He went over to the gym half an hour early. He felt good inside, the way he used to feel when he was walking down the aisle to the ring and the *compañeros* in the peanut gallery were yelling *Viva, Pancho Villa!* He went around glad-handing everybody outside, wanting to make sure all the boys saw him. In the gym the seats were full, and a lot of the boys were standing around the ring making bets and talking it over. Pancho wandered among them, careful not to brush his white linen against anybody's dirty suit. Someone let a stream of tobacco juice go and it narrowly missed Pancho's feet. "Hey, you look where you spitting," Pancho scolded.

He went over to the ring and picked up a program. He read through it eagerly, running his finger along the lines, until he found his name. It made him tingle all over when he saw it: "Special Announcer: Young Pancho Villa III." Eddie Gibbs was leaning against the ring with a pencil over his ear, going over the line-up for the evening with the referee. Pancho walked toward him briskly. He had better check over the program with Eddie and make sure just when he was to go on, he thought to himself. He went over to Gibbs with self-conscious importance.

Suddenly he stopped. Soldier Conlon was looking over Gibbs' shoulder. Pancho didn't think Conlon had seen him. He turned and tried to lose himself in the crowd. He edged behind two bigger men and started working his way around the ring. Then he heard the voice behind him, "Hey, Pancho. Hey, big shot."

There had never been anything in the ring that frightened him like the sound of the Soldier's voice. Everything cramped inside him when he heard it. He must keep his suit clean tonight, he thought, he must keep his shoes white. And though he did not know the words, the fear of them throbbed in him: he must not be *violated* tonight. He must not be *sullied*.

The Soldier watched this fear come into Pancho's face, and Pancho saw the orange grin with the false teeth. The Soldier took a step toward him. Pancho backed away.

"Hey, big shot. C'mere. I wanna talk to ya."

Pancho ducked behind the seats. The Soldier moved after him, laughing as he went. Pancho walked faster. He could feel the sweat prickling under his collar. He broke into a trot. So did the Soldier. Pancho ran around the seats, and when he saw the Soldier still coming, he hurried up the stairs to the gallery. So did the Soldier. They were running now. They ran all the way around the balcony. Pancho's legs were short and the tight white suit checked his stride. The Soldier grinned as he ran.



"Cigarette, sailor?"

He was having a great time and he was gaining. "Hey, big shot," he kept calling. "Hey, big shot."

Pancho raced past the door to the fire escape, wheeled and darted out. He tried to hold the door from the outside, but the Soldier was too strong and the door pulled away from him. The orange gums and the false teeth and the crazy laugh were right behind him now. Pancho looked down the dizzying descent of fire escape that fell away to the narrow alley behind the gym. A feverish prayer beat in his mind. . . Then his small, neat feet broke into a Bill Robinson tap dance down the metal steps.

Still laughing, the Soldier reached down and grabbed the edge of Pancho's coat. For a moment Pancho dangled there in the Soldier's firm grip. With his hands swinging wildly into the air and his short legs pumping up and down in a futile effort to tear himself from the Soldier's grasp, he looked like a mechanical doll.

Then suddenly his left fist shot out, the old left hook. All his body was behind that fist, and all his life. The force of it spun him around, toward the Soldier. It caught the Soldier full in the mouth, smashing the laugh. The Soldier let go of Pancho's coat and snapped instinctively to the fighter's stance, the left arms straight out for the jab, the right cocked under the lowered jaw.

The Soldier's left drove like a piston at Pancho's face. Pancho reeled backward. For a moment he was looking up at the sky above the roof of the gym, then at the narrowing darkness of the alley below, as he struggled to break his fall. He grabbed for the railing twice and it wasn't there, but the third time it was. He hung on desperately with his right hand. The Soldier was com-

(turn over)

ing at him again. Pancho squeezed his left fist tighter and crouched.

He was in the ring now, crowded into a corner, holding the top rung of the rope with his right hand to steady himself, lashing out with his left. The old hook, the wild left hook. The Soldier's face came down to meet the punch and his head snapped back. All that Pancho remembered was the look of surprise on the Soldier's face before he tumbled gracefully down the metal steps to melt into the darkness below.

Young Pancho Villa the Third brushed himself off and walked back into the gym again. He was saved. That was all he could think about. He was saved from Soldier Conlon. There was nobody now to stop him from climbing into that ring under the glare of the overhead lights and raising his megaphone to his lips.

Swinging his megaphone proudly, Pancho went down the aisle to the ring. Old-timers smiled to see this little brown man in the snappy white suit strutting by them like a pouter pigeon. Their voices followed him down the aisle in good-natured banter, "Hiya, Pancho, geev it to heem!—Well look who's here, our favorite announcer . . ." Pancho acknowledged his fans with an important little nod and kept on going toward the ring.

Eddie Gibbs was in the ring, introducing a couple of old champs. After the champs had lumbered into the ring, mitted the crowd and lumbered out again, Gibbs grinned down at Pancho and announced, "Introducing next that distinguished personage of the boxing game, the Joe Humphreys of the West Coast, Young Pancho Villa the Third!"

It got a laugh from the crowd. Some of the boys stuck out their tongues and gave it the razzberry. Others cupped their hands to their mouths and yelled witty remarks. But this isn't what Pancho heard. Young Pan-

cho Villa the Third, standing under the arc light with the big megaphone in his hand, heard acclaim. He was up there at last where he had always wanted to be, a white suit, a megaphone and everybody listening.

He was shining. His oily black hair was shining. His eyes were black and oily and shining too. His smiling face shone in the glow of the overhead lights.

He bowed to his audience, just a little half-bow it was, performed with dignity, lifted the end of the megaphone high in the air, and let his words roll through it louder than they ever had before: "Lay-deez and gen-tle-men, it geeves me grrreat pleasure to be here with you tonight. . ."

Someone yelled, "But how much pleasure does it give us?" and the room rocked with laughter again. But Pancho went right on. He heard nothing but the sound of his own voice. He saw nothing but the metal-rimmed mouth of his megaphone, into which he was pouring his life. He no longer saw the faces laughing at him. Or the two men in dark-blue uniforms who had just entered quietly and stood waiting against the door in the rear. He still didn't know anything was wrong when Eddie Gibbs reached up to him through the ropes and handed him a folded piece of paper. He simply opened it with an official gesture, raised his megaphone again and made a formal announcement: "Your atten-shun, pleece: Pancho—the cops are waiteng for you at the entrance in coneck-shun weeth the killeeng of Soldier Con-lon."

The crowd had already begun to laugh, but it caught itself, and a hush fell over the place. The absence of sound made Pancho stop and gulp for breath as if sound had taken the place of oxygen in his world. He read the message again, this time to himself. Then he climbed through the ropes and went slowly up the aisle toward the officers, swinging his megaphone as he walked.



Introducing this month's Miss Dude . . .

MICHELINE ARVELLE

Your editors found this winsome, sprightly mademoiselle in New York only two months after her arrival from France. Of course we promptly snapped her up as a real winner. Exuding her own delightful variety of Gallic charm, Micheline did the rounds of the town, meeting and greeting the great and near-great of Gotham nightlife wherever she went. The result was a resounding success—and a resounding good time for all concerned. After you've seen this photographic record of Micheline's triumphal tour, you'll understand why everybody loves her . . .

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK EGA



An evening at Gotham's swank Hotel Plaza—where Micheline made a big impression. Luis Tamayo, Pepe Lara, and Trini Reyes, who star with Les Chevoles, the famous Latin musical group, took time out from the Plaza's show for a long cozy chat with her.



Portrait of a beautiful girl having fun—Micheline Arvelle on the town! →

← The ultra-fashionable Calypso club makes sure Micheline's party doesn't miss a thing—including a lesson on the congo drum.





Nothing like furs to enhance a girl. Renowned furrier Milton C. Herrman picks the style best suited to her.



The fabulous Golden Slipper plays host as comedian Jackie Winston and emcee Steve Goynor ringside with Micheline.



A sleek Ford Thunderbird, at Micheline's command, whisked her around New York on her week-long tour of the city's pleasure spots.



At New York's famous Cofe Rouge, Micheline holds hands—just for fun—with a newly-found admirer. Bond-leader Lee Castle looks on in envy.

Gene Leone, whose famous Italian restaurant bears his name, succumbed to Miss Dude's charms, made sure the waiters brought the best of everything.







*what Jack couldn't do,
his girl friend could
and between them they finished
the giant—but good*



*there was a hipster man
who wore a hipster smile
being a hipster cat
he caught himself a mouse
whom he kept for his enjoyment
in his Park Avenue penthouse*



*little Red Riding Hood
in bed we think shoulda stood
girls so buxious and nice
would be paradise
if only they would what they could*



*little Miss Muffet
decided to rough it
and tossed her undies away
now she walks down the street
and the guys get a treat
as the breeze blows their blues away*



*there was a young woman who lived in a shoe
she had so many lovers she didn't know what to do
she gave them some loving, she gave them some sex
and they all paid her off with certified checks*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY TULESMAN/TOPIX



MOTHER GOOSE ON THE LOOSE

If you thought the favorite legends of your youth had lost their charm—well, just look around. With a little updating, they're as delightful as ever. Mother Goose with a little sauce is certainly worth a gander, especially with Nona Van Tosh around.



*Humpty Dumpty had a big ball
with a swingin' chick who lived down the hall
the next day all the king's horses and men
couldn't get Dumpty to humpty again*

GIRL ON A HIGHWAY

It was the fresh, clean, misty look of the girl that Stanley noticed first: something that belonged to the countryside she traveled over, a quality of green, rain-washed hills and innocence, only a feel, a thing that occurred to you as she talked, like someone searching. Maybe it had been her voice.

"I can give you a lift as far as Santa Barbara."

For some reason Stanley had only stood there, in the rain, feeling an aching tiredness. His summer suit had already been soaked through and hung limply to his skin. Then, embarrassingly, his teeth began to chatter, and he couldn't tell whether it was because of the jolting truck ride from Los Alamos or the cold or this strangely beautiful girl who had stopped her car on a flooded back highway near Buellton and offered a ride to a man she had never seen before.

"I'll take that ride," he said, and smiled.

When she had stopped the car, the girl leaned over the convertible's seat and rolled down the right-hand window. Stanley had only a glimpse of her beauty—the sandy soft hair and copper skin, the curved rich lips and the tops of two round and perfect breasts. It had made him feel a loneliness, an emptiness in the summer rain.

Now, after he had opened the convertible's door and pushed his wet, peeling suitcase behind the front seat and sat down beside her, Stanley could see her better. She wore a thin soft gabardine raincoat, buttoned as she would a dress, so that her neck and the rounded summits of her breasts were exposed. It was also an expensive raincoat, just as the car was expensive, and Stanley wondered idly what kind of clothes she wore beneath.

"What is your name?" he asked. And it was then she laughed, a warm, pleasant laugh unlike the night and cold.

"Now after all," she said, "shouldn't I be asking you the questions? They say Highway 101 is noted for its dangerous hitchhikers!"

He laughed then himself. "That's right. I could be—well, an axe murderer, an escaped convict—" He moved his wet shoulders against the leather seat. "Nothing so interesting, I'm afraid. Just broke and on my way to Los Angeles. The name's Stanley Matheson—"

"Mine's Carol."

He looked at her. "Carol what?" he asked.

"Just Carol—" she replied. But there was a nervous movement.

He grinned disarmingly. "And even *that* isn't true. I suppose!"

She looked at him now. "To tell the truth, it isn't. No more than the Matheson belongs to you—" Then, notice-

(turn over)

The shimmering
desert heat
made the girl
look even lovelier—
and frightening

ing the sign to Solvang which jumped at them from the night, she slowly applied the brakes. "Do you mind if we go by way of Santa Ynez?"

"Of course not. Is it shorter?"

"No. Prettier."

"In the rain?"

"Yes," she said gently, "even in the rain. Now relax and light me a cigarette and enjoy the ride."

It took Stanley unawares. "But I am relaxed!" he blurted, looking up at the girl. Then, taking out his pack of Chesterfields, he added: "Well, I guess you're right. Here's your cigarette." He glanced up toward the door. "Mind if I take my coat off? I'm soaked to the skin."

"There's a hook right above you."

"Thanks."

And, for a while, they both relaxed. The car was warm and Stanley felt his clothes beginning to dry. He noticed that her cigarette had gone out.

"Here," he said, offering her his lighter. That was when the car swayed gently on the long sweeping curve which leads to Solvang. Quite accidentally he found himself losing his balance. The lighter went out and Stanley grabbed the left door, his arm brushing against the curve of her coat, touching the firmness of her breasts, the pointed hardness beneath. He started to withdraw.

"Don't," she said, lowering her eyes but not looking at him. "I would rather that you left your arm where it is—but—"

Stanley smiled at her kindly. "But—you're not sure, you mean. For me—"

She grasped his fingers with her free hand. "It's all right now," she said and pressed his hand against the soft gabardine which covered her breasts.

"We're not going to stop in Solvang—" the girl's voice continued, tense and constricted.

"We'll just drive on—?" he helped.

"Yes," she agreed, her voice barely audible now. "Please. Let's just drive on."

And that's all they did for miles, listening to the soft hum of the radio, his arm about her now, neither of them saying a word, thinking their thoughts as the car and the night swept them through the end-of-the-world forest which leads ever higher to San Marcos Pass. And Stanley wondering hard about this girl, knowing surely what it would mean, how you hesitate to tell anyone about a thing like this. Because they'd cheapen it, and cheapen Carol. Would never understand—as he did not yet, and maybe never would—the reasons why. He knew they did not matter.

Finally, they were at the summit of Condor Point, and below them, spread-eagled like a silver girl, the nighttime beauty of Cachuma Lake, its fingers reaching into a dozen darkened canyons far away. The wheels of the car protested as they pulled onto the wet sand platform high on a cliff which overlooked the lake.

There was not the whisper of another car, as there had not been in twenty miles. Just the two of them now, as the engine clogged to silence, the silver lake below, the melancholy radio and its soft light, the pit-pat-pit-pat sounds of dying rain which touched the canvas top of the car.

"I'm so glad you were at Buellton," she said. "So terribly glad—"



But he did not let her finish. Instead, he did what he had been aching to do for the long, desolate miles. Cupping her chin between his hands, he kissed her, the warm curve of her lips caressing over and over against his own in a searching, almost frightened way. And the ache within him burned now, crying for release.

She took his hand with a firmness that startled him and together they began, between kisses, slowly—terribly slowly—to undo each of the buttons of her coat. And with every button he would touch her skin, the soft, browned skin—firm and young and alive to his touch.

As the raincoat slipped open, Stanley suddenly realized that she wore nothing beneath it except herself. First, the two young breasts spilled outward, small and perfect, the nipples raised and living things. Then the flat, firm surface of her belly, like a piece of sculpture. And the delicate V of her legs joined by the smooth, tanned thighs. Stanley swore to himself. It was a thing too perfect, too utterly unbelievable.

Only it was something that had happened. It was there. And they were there. The seat was back now, as far as it would go. And when Stanley lifted her from the coat it seemed an act almost sacrosanct, an offering, the smooth, slender body so yielding to his arms.

She undressed him then, quietly and with tenderness, her hands hungrily, almost desperately searching across his wide, strong chest. He relaxed and let her do it. His clothing was wet and tight from the rain and he had to help her. Quickly, almost terribly, Stanley realized that it had all changed once she had started. Her hands reached, having all the clumsy cruelty of a child opening its first Christmas present, greedily . . .

Stanley watched the top of her head now, the soft brown hair glinting by the light of the radio. And he could not for the life of him see the lake beyond the windows. All the muscles of his neck and shoulders taut with what she did, he jerked backwards and fought back the cry that caught painfully in his throat. When he thought that he could surely stand it no longer, she raised up her beautiful face to look directly in his eyes. "Now," she said.

His mouth seemed to go to her breasts without his knowing it; and because of the girl's strange power, he suddenly felt oddly like a child at nurse. But then his body was upon her, his hands moving over the smooth limbs, biting her, wanting to take it all. And, at last, they were together, and the rain had stopped.

They drank coffee then from the warm thermos and talked of it.

"It's been happening for a long time," she explained. "For over a year now, along the roads to Santa Maria. Every weekend."

"Your family—"

"There's just my father. He's very wealthy. He owns several thousand acres near Montecito."

"It's rich country."

"Yes, I know." Carol had his jacket about her shoulders now, over the raincoat which she was wearing once again. She shivered slightly and rubbed the warm coffee cup between the palms of her hands.

"And will it go on?" He could not help but look at her—directly.

"Now—now I'm not sure."

Somehow, Stanley's mind seemed suddenly clear. He removed a cigarette from his pack, lighted it and passed it over to Carol. "How was it?" he asked. His voice was cold, careful.

"How do you mean?" She looked shocked, as if she had never seen his face before.

"I mean did it mean anything to you?"

"No."

"You're telling the truth?"

She was no longer nervous now, but sure and steady about what she said. "Yes. I'm telling the truth."

"I don't need to tell you you're bad off."

"I guess not—" But now the tears had begun to well up in her eyes. "All right. I've told you everything you want to know." Her voice was fevered. "You mean nothing to me! It meant nothing to me!"

He began to smile now, sarcastically, purposefully. That was when she hit him across the face with force enough to throw him against the door. "God damn you!" she cried. And then she began to weep, and Stanley watched her. They were deep, choking sobs, and as he moved her to the other side of the car, she huddled there, looking like a teen-ager who had been reprimanded by her father.

He started the motor and slowly pulled the car onto the highway again. For a long time she said nothing and let Stanley drive her car, and they both listened to the wheels as they hit the rims of asphalt. At last she looked at him, her eyes red with crying. Tentatively, affectionately, she reached out a hand in a futile attempt to straighten his wrinkled white shirt.

"It was different," she said. "Is that what you wanted me to say?"

Stanley held the steering wheel firmly with his left hand, a cigarette burning in his right. He did not look at her. "Is it the truth?" he asked, his voice strong and demanding.

"Yes," she said, simply.

They had reached the top of the pass now, and the road twisted down to Santa Barbara before them, a thousand distant lights and the sea. It had begun to rain again, lightly, and the car felt slippery on the road. Stanley cut down his speed slightly. They had passed the first car a mile back.

"It means something to both of us, I'm afraid," he said. "And it's something we'll have to think about."

"You can come to Montecito. It's wonderful country there—"

"And live with you and your father?" He laughed.

"No, I suppose not," she sighed, closing her eyes and glancing down. "I don't know what to do."

Stanley thought a lot on those wet roads down to Santa Barbara, thought of the impossible, hopeless thing it was. Something you can't tell someone else, because you don't even understand it yourself. Then, for the first time, he noticed the registration strapped to the steering shaft. There was enough light in the car to read the name without being noticed. **GERALD LILLARD**. He couldn't read the name of the town, but it was in the state of Washington, a thousand miles from Montecito. He took his eyes off the road to look at her, and she had noticed. Her eyes burned into him, cold and distant and full of hate.

But it was too late. The car had already begun to slide, a long dreamlike skid that carried the big convertible careening across the road. The steering wheel was useless, and Stanley could remember only two things that happened at that moment: his looking at the speedometer and noting the speed of over seventy miles per hour and the terrible catlike stare of the girl beside him.

Then it began. The car hit a low stone wall on the right side of the road and with an ear-splitting crash went over it, the huge, lurching vehicle climbing and clawing upwards on the dirt bank he had noticed earlier. Stanley could see that they were a good thirty feet above the road, at almost a forty-five degree angle, the accelerator pedal stuck and engine screaming.

With one desperate reach of his hand for Carol, Stanley felt himself thrown to the floor and another resounding crash as the car bounded over something else, seemed to hang suspended in the air for a moment and stopped with all the immediacy of hitting a ten-ton truck.

The first thing Stanley thought of was fire, but the car was not burning. There was only the taste of blood and broken glass on his bleeding lips. He pulled himself out. They had hit a tree, three hundred feet above a ravine. And the beautiful girl he had known as Carol lay in a crushed heap twenty yards to the side of the car. One look told him it was useless. He could only stand there now, letting the rain wash away the dirt and blood on his cut lips and listening to the silence. It was then that Stanley noticed the horn was blowing—a long mournful note in the pouring rain. And he wondered what he should say to the police.



The town was called "the Inferno"—and one night the yellow-haired woman found out why

fiction . . . PAUL BOWLES

UNDER THE SKY

Inland from the sea on the dry coastal plain lay the town, open, spread out under the huge high sky. People who lived outside in the country, and even some of the more educated town-dwellers, called the town "the Inferno" because nowhere in the region was the heat so intense. No other place around was quite so shadowless and so dusty; it seemed that the clouds above shrank upwards to their farthest possible positions. Many miles above, and to all sides, they hung there in their massive patterns, remote and motionless. In the spring, during the nights, the lightning constantly jumped from one cloud to another, revealing unexpected distances between them. Then, if anyone ever looked at the sky, he was surprised to see how each flash revealed a seemingly more distant portion of the heavens to which still more clouds had receded. But people in the town seldom turned their heads upward. They knew at what time of the year the rains would come, and it was unnecessary to scan those vast regions in order to say what day that would be. When the wind had blown hard for two weeks so that

the dust filled the wide empty streets, and the lightning grew brighter each night until finally there was a little thunder, they could be sure the water would soon fall.

Once a year when the lightning was in the sky Jacinto left his village in the mountains and walked down to the town, carrying with him all the things his family had made since his last trip. There were two days of walking in the sierra where it was cool; the third day the road was through the hot lands, and this was the day he preferred, because the road was flat and he could walk faster and leave the others behind. He was taller and prouder than they, and he refused to bend over in order to be able to trot uphill and downhill as they did. In the mountains he labored to keep up with them, but on the plain he strode powerfully ahead and sometimes arrived at the market before sunset.

Now he stood in the public square with a small paper parcel in his hand. He had arrived the day before. Instead of sitting in the sidestreet near the fountain and discus-
(turn over)



"It's for you."

sing the sales with the others from his village, he walked into the municipal garden and sat down on a concrete bench marked "1936." He looked up and down the walk. No one paid him any attention. He was barefoot, so the shoeshine boys passed him by.

Tearing open the paper packet he emptied the dried leaves into his left hand. With his right he picked out all the little round, black berries and tossed them away. Then he crushed the leaves and slowly rolled them into five thin cigarettes. This took all his attention for a half hour.

A voice beside him said: "That's pretty."

He looked up. It was a town-dweller; he had never seen him before, so he did not answer.

"All for you?" said the other in the silken town voice that Jacinto had learned to distrust.

"I bought it. I made them," said Jacinto.

"But I like *grifas* too," smiled the stranger. He was poorly dressed and had black teeth.

Jacinto covered the cigarettes completely with one big hand which he placed on the seat of the bench. The stranger pointed to a soldier sleeping on another bench near the iron bandstand.

"He wants one and I want one. You should be more careful. It's three months now for possessing marijuana. Don't you know?"

"No," said Jacinto. "I don't know." Then he slowly handed over two of the cigarettes. The man took them.

"So long," he said.

Jacinto stood up full of fury, and with the other three cigarettes still in his hand, he walked out into the plaza and down the long street that led to the station. It was nearly time for the daily train from the north. Sometimes crazy people got off, who would give a man enough money for two good meals, just for carrying a bundle into the town for them. There was a cemetery behind the roundhouse where some of the railroad employees went

to smoke the weed. He remembered it from the preceding year; he had met an inspector there who had taken him to see a girl. She had proved to be ugly—one side of her face was mottled with blue and purple.

At the station the train had already arrived. The people trying to get on were fighting with those who were trying to get off. He wondered why with all those open windows everyone insisted on going through the two little doors at the ends of the cars. It would have been very simple the other way, but these people were too stupid to think of it. His defeat at the hands of the townsman still bothered him; he wanted to have a gun so he could pull it out and shout: "I am the father of all of you!" But it was not likely that he ever would have a gun.

Without approaching the platform where so many people were moving about, he stood and impassively watched the confusion. From the crowd three strange-looking people suddenly emerged. They all had very white skin and yellow hair. He knew, of course, that they were from a faraway place because everyone knows that when people look as strange as that they are from the capital or even farther. There were two women and one man, and as they approached him, he noticed that they were speaking a language which only they could understand. Each one carried a leather bag covered with small squares of colored paper stuck on at different angles. He stepped back, keeping his eyes on the face of the younger woman. He could not be sure whether he found her beautiful or revolting. Still he continued to look at her as she passed, holding on to the man's arm. The other woman noticed him, and smiled faintly as she went by.

He turned angrily and walked toward the tracks. He was angry at her stupidity—for thinking he could have enough money to pay her as much as she would surely want. He walked on until he came to the cemetery. It was empty save for the gray lizards that scurried from the path at his feet. In the farthest corner there was a small square building with a white stone woman on top. He sat in the shade of the little building and took out his cigarettes.

The train whistled; it was starting on its trip to the sea where the people eat nothing but fish and travel on top of the water. He drew in the first few breaths very slowly and deliberately, holding the smoke in his lungs until he felt it burning the edges of his soul. After a few minutes the feeling began to take shape. From the back of his head it moved down to his shoulders. It was as if he were wearing a tight metal garment. At that instant he looked at the sky and saw far above him the tiny black dots that were vultures, moving ever so slowly in circles as they surveyed the plain in the afternoon sunlight. Beyond them stood the clouds, deep and monumental. "Ay!" he sighed, shutting his eyes, and it occurred to him that this was what the dead people, who were lying on all sides of him, looked at day after day. This was all they could see—the clouds, and the vultures, which they did not need to fear, hidden safely as they were, deep in holy ground.

He continued to smoke, going deeper and deeper into delight. Finally he lay back and murmured: "Now I am dead too." When he opened his eyes it was still the same day, and the sun was very low in the sky. Some men were talking nearby. He listened; they were trainmen come

to smoke, discussing wages and prices of meals. He did not believe any of the figures they so casually mentioned. They were lying to impress one another, and they did not even believe each other. He smoked half of the second cigarette, rose, stretched, and jumped over the cemetery wall, going back to the station by a roundabout path in order not to have to speak to the trainmen. Those people, when they smoked, always wanted more and more company; they would never let a fellow smoker go quietly on his way.

He went to the cantina by the station, and standing in the street, watched the railway employees playing billiards inside. As night approached, the lightning became increasingly visible. He walked up the long street toward the center of town. Men were playing marimbas in the doorways and in front of the houses—three or four together, and sometimes only one, indolently. The marimbas and the marijuana were the only good things in the town, reflected Jacinto. The women were ugly and dirty, and the men were all thieves and drunkards. He remembered the three people at the station. They would be in the hotel opposite the plaza. He walked a little faster, and his eyes, bloodshot from lack of sleep and too much of the drug, opened a bit wider.

After he had eaten heartily in the market sitting by the edge of the fountain, he felt very well. By the side wall of the cathedral were all the families from the mountains, some already asleep, the others preparing for the night. Almost all the stalls in the market were dark; a few figures still stood in front of the cold fruit-juice stand. Jacinto felt in his pocket for the stub and the whole cigarette, and keeping his fingers around them, walked across to the park. The celestial fireworks were very bright, but there was no thunder. Throughout the town sounded the clink and purr of the marimbas, some near and some far away. A soft breeze stirred the branches of the few lemon trees in the park. He walked along thoughtfully until he came to a bench directly opposite the entrance of the hotel, and there he sat down and brazenly began to smoke his stub. After a few minutes it was easier for him to believe that one of the two yellow-haired women would come out. He flicked away the butt, leaned back and stared straight at the hotel. The manager had put a square loudspeaker over the entrance door, and out of it came a great crackling and hissing that covered the sound of the marimbas. Occasionally a few loud notes of band music rose above the chaos, and from time to time there seemed to be a man's voice speaking behind the noise. Jacinto was annoyed: the women would want to stay inside where they could hear the sound better.

A long time went by. The radio was silenced. The few voices in the park disappeared down the streets. By the cathedral everyone was asleep. Even the marimbas seemed to have stopped, but when the breeze occasionally grew more active, it brought with it, swelling and dying, long marimba trills from a distant part of the town.

It grew very late. There was no sound but the lemon leaves rubbing together and the jet of water splashing in the basin in the center of the market. Jacinto was used to waiting. And halfway through the night a woman stepped out of the hotel, stood for a moment looking at the sky, and walked across the street to the park. From

(turn over)

his bench in the dark he watched her as she approached. In the lightning he saw that it was not the younger one. He was disappointed. She looked upward again before moving into the shade of the lemon trees, and in a moment she sat down on the next bench and lighted a cigarette. He waited a few minutes. Then he said: "Señorita."

The yellow-haired woman cried: "Oh!" She had not seen him. She jumped up and stood still, peering toward his bench.

He moved to the end of the seat and calmly repeated the word "Señorita."

She walked uncertainly toward him, still peering. He knew this was a ruse. She could see him quite clearly each second or so, whenever the sky lighted up. When she was near enough to the bench, he motioned for her to sit down beside him. As he had suspected, she spoke his tongue.

"What is it?" she asked. The talk in the strange language at the station had only been for show, after all.

"Sit down, señorita."

"Why?"

"Because I tell you to."

She laughed and threw away her cigarette.

"That's not a reason," she said, sitting down at the other end of the bench. "What are you doing here so late?" She spoke carefully and correctly, like a priest. He answered this by saying: "And you, what are you looking for?"

"Nothing."

"Yes. You are looking for something," he said solemnly.

"I was not sleeping. It is very hot."

"No. It is not hot," said Jacinto. He was feeling increasingly sure of himself, and he drew out the last cigarette and began to smoke it. "What are you doing here in this town?" he asked her after a moment.

"Passing on my way south to the border," she said, and she told him how she was traveling with two friends, a husband and wife, and how she often took a walk when they had gone to bed.

Jacinto listened as he drew in the smoke and breathed it out. Suddenly he jumped up. Touching her arm, he said: "Come to the market."

She arose, asking: "Why?" and walked with him across the park. When they were in the street, he took her wrist fiercely and pressing it, said between his teeth: "Look at the sky?"

She looked up wonderingly, a little fearfully. He went on in a low, intense voice: "As God is my witness, I am going into the hotel and kill the man who came here with you."

Her eyes grew large. She tried to wrest her arm away, but he would not let it go, and he thrust his face into hers. "I have a pistol in my pocket and I am going to kill that man."

"But why?" she whispered weakly, looking up and down the empty street.

"I want his wife."

The woman said: "It is not possible. She would scream."

"I know the proprietor," said Jacinto, rolling his eyes and grinning. The woman seemed to believe him. Now he felt that a great thing was about to happen.

"And you," he said, twisting her arm brutally, "you do not scream."

"No."

Again he pointed to the sky.

"God is my witness. You can save the life of your friend. Come with me."

She was trembling violently, but as they stumbled through the street and he let go of her an instant, she began to run. With one bound he had overtaken her, and he made her stop and look at the sky again as he went through his threats once more. She saw his wide, red-veined eyes in a bright flash of lightning, and his utterly empty face. Mechanically she allowed him to push her along through the streets. He did not let go of her again.

"You are saving your friend's life," he said. "God will reward you."

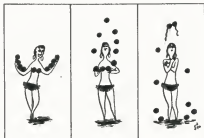
She was sobbing as she went along. No one passed them as they moved unsteadily on toward the station. When they were nearly there they made a great detour past the edge of town, and finally came to the cemetery.

"This is a holy place," he murmured, swiftly crossing himself. "Here you are going to save your friend's life."

He took off his shirt, laid it on the stony ground, and pushed her down. There was nothing but the insistent, silent flashing in the sky. She kept her eyes shut, but she shuddered at each flash, even with her lids closed. The wind blew harder, and the smell of the dust was in her nostrils.

He took her back as far as the park and there he let go of her. Then he said: "Good night, señorita," and walked away very quickly. He was happy because she had not asked for any money.

The next year when he came down to the town he waited at the station four afternoons to see the train come in. The last afternoon he went to the cemetery and sat near the small square building that had the stone woman on top of it. On the ground the dust blew past. The enormous clouds hung in the sky and the vultures were there high above him. As he smoked he recalled the yellow-haired woman. After a time he began to weep, and rolled over onto the earth, clutching the pebbles as he sobbed. An old woman of the town, who came every day to her son's grave, passed near to him. Seeing him, she shook her head and murmured to herself: "He has lost his mother."



WOMAN WITH A SECRET

The woman of Arabia has a piquance and charm all her own—a compound of submissiveness and haughtiness which charms and dazzles the Westerner uneducated in her ways. A coy secretiveness lurks in her eyes—as if she perpetually held a veil over her most intimate thoughts. Here, Amar Basra portrays The Invocation to the God of Love—an ancient dance from the Middle East. It is the essence of the Arab female's enigma.







*Long jet-black hair, a sleek, rippling body,
and an age-old wisdom in her eyes—these
are the ingredients of the classical Arab
beauty. Bejeweled or bare, she is a rare and
strange treasure for the lucky man who
owns her love—a woman whose greatest
pleasure is in pleasing, yet whose face,
even in the deepest throes of love, always
shrouds and masks itself in mystery. She is
a woman with a secret... the secret
which is the eternal riddle of woman.*





ILLUSTRATED BY RAY KEANE

EDITOR'S CHOICE:

AN UNUSUAL TALE OF DESIRE AND DECEIT

Dominic kept remembering that the guy in the bar mirror was himself. Not that he had anything against himself, but it meant the liquor wasn't working properly. Which was a sin and a shame because alcohol, after womankind, was mankind's rarest gift. Prudently administered, it made good things rosy, sad things dim, toned up the liver and gilded the lily. So far it had performed none of these miracles.

Dominic considered the man in the mirror. With a little charity, he became a sort of stocky, slightly aging version of the current crop of Italian actors. Not exactly good looking by Hollywood standards, but, well, mature and masculine in a non-cultivated way. A diamond in the rough. But charity required imagination, which in turn required work. And this was precisely what liquor was supposed to eliminate.

In general, a hell of a dull afternoon. If he'd been on duty, it would have been supportable. But this was his day off, the high point of the week, which made it downright criminal.

It began with rain, not the healthy rain that invites a good book and a fire, but a depressing drizzle—the kind Noah might have had the thirty-ninth day at sea, with nothing to break the monotony below decks except swabbing the engine room and building an addition to the rabbit pen. Dominic had come in out of it to Herman's Grill. Feeling cocky, he'd asked Herman for the dice cup, announcing he would take the pudgy Dutchman for a fast few hands of razzle-dazzle. It had been brutal. He never even got one horse on Herman. Each time he lost he'd buy himself a belt of house bourbon and Herman a cigar. After a while Herman had enough cigars to equip the waiting room of a maternity ward. It was just one of those days when you weren't supposed to win anything, even arguments.

Taking a last look in the mirror at no one's leading man, Dominic watched him finish his drink, give his larcenous host an ungracious nod and leave. The bourbon would be better at his apartment, and certainly much cheaper. Since he was in no hurry to reach it, he found himself loafing down a side street on an unaccustomed detour. And that was when he saw the sign and felt his luck change.

Madame Zorita, Psychic Consultant.

It was hanging in the window of a ground-floor flat, the lettering neat and fresh against the pane as if it hadn't been there long. Whistling, Dominic took the sagging stairs and pushed the bell.

The door was opened too quickly by a short, dark-haired girl in an oriental-looking kimono. The professionally somber expression on her face—such a nice face—seemed preposterously out of character.

"Are you the Madame?" Dominic asked politely.

"I'm Madame Zorita," she said stiffly. "Won't you come in?"

She led the way to a small parlor. It had been cleared of everything except a card table with facing chairs and

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god bless the ugly virgin

When a person is twenty-seven years old, as Katy Pascal was, and she knows she is quite homely (as Katy Pascal was), but she knows she has a fantastically-proportioned body (as Katy Pascal had), and still she's a virgin (as Katy Pascal most assuredly was), a person begins to get restless.

Katy Pascal had been restless for ten years.

In fact, it might be said that her restlessness had slowly but steadily turned into a form of "animal-pacing-cage" tension. She had a habit of wetting her lips, licking her chops, when a handsome man walked past her at the lunch counter in Clancy's Diner.

Katy would study herself for hours at a time, in the full-length mirror of her two-room apartment. She knew it was a form of narcissism and that many people would consider her strange, but she *had* to reassure herself constantly that the body was magnificent enough to offset the face. Because the face was ghastly.

She would stand tip-toe before the mirror, stretching lithely toward the ceiling, after her shower, rubbed pink (turn to page 54)

Harlan Ellison outdoes himself in this one:

a tragi-comic tale about an ageless problem . . .



and smooth by a fluffy bath-towel. She would watch the muscles tighten, and the ridges stand down her chest, and the hollows appear in her buttocks, and the straining eagerness of fresh, untouched flesh.

She would raise up till her stomach lost its incipient tiny-bulge, and hollowed in, sweeping up to magnificent rose-tipped breasts and sweeping down to rich, full thighs. Breasts that were not too large, but which angled softly upward near their tips, pointing off away from her, into the sky.

Breasts that she cupped with hot hands, feeling the giving smoothness of them, the fiery pulsing of blood in them. That she wanted to press so desperately against a man's chest.

Thighs that were round and unblemished, marked by the indentations of her stocking-tops. Cream-colored and firm, long and rewarding. Thighs that ached to be pressed around some man's body.

Her eyes were brown, and her hair was a gleaming chestnut color, hanging page-boy to her shoulders with glosses and shimmers.

The body was magnificent—but the face was a nightmare.

Her body was delicate, with a voluptuousness that came from ample proportions without overabundance. But her face was someone else's face; it was heavy, massive, almost lantern-jawed. The chin was cleft, the nose was angled, the cheekbones far too prominent. Her teeth protruded slightly, and that compounded with the granite, jutting jaw to give a decidedly prognathous appearance to an otherwise dazzling form.

Singly, most of the mismatched features of her face might not have been unpleasant, might even have been attractive. But combined, they were fearsome, and Katy had gone twenty-seven innings without a hit.

She had finally decided to score . . . since luck seemed already to have thrown the game.

She had waited, and watched, and selected in her own mind, only coming to the decision after deep inner struggles. She wouldn't hope for marriage any longer—that was out of the question—but she would do away with this damnable virgin state, at once. She was going to seduce a man! And after she had watched and waited and selected, she decided on a calculated plan of action, and the objective was Milt Rodman.

Milt Rodman who drove truck over Turnpike between New York and Cleveland, carting fresh fruit for A&P. Milt Rodman who stopped in Clancy's Diner, where she worked, for a steak (medium-rare), French fries (well-done) and apple pie (a piece of cheese on top, please) when going either way.

Katy would have liked to think that Milt stopped to see her, but that wasn't the case. The case was simple enough: Clancy's food was good.

But once Katy had mentally winnowed through all the hundreds of men who stopped in at the diner, she settled on Milt. It took a while to decide, but finally she knew it was him, because of the hesitance with which he talked about his conquests to the other truckers. They all belloved and winked lecherously and swore, telling about the broads they'd laid, but Milt always spoke in softer tones, telling the stories he infrequently told, with a certain restraint and obvious gentlemanly regard for

the girls concerned. That was the kind of man she wanted to seduce her!

Big Milt, with shoulders like a Chinese water-carrier (the ones with the big stick across their shoulders), and a face like the truck had run over his kisser while he was down underneath repairing a flat. Big Milt with the big hands, and the slow tongue . . . and the hot eyes.

He never said anything more to Katy than his order, might not really have seen her. It was like that with most of the men. But she stood by the grill and watched him when he was stopping-in. Watched how the muscles bunched against his shirt, how the sweat stood out on his neck and forehead. She watched the tightness of his pants about his hips, and she dreamed at night of that body pressed on top of hers, his big, heavy hands exploring every curve, every warm crevice of her body, and she tossed terribly on her bed, biting the back of her hand, and swearing she would get to Milt Rodman.

Because Katy Pascal had decided to give him her virginity.

It was difficult getting Milt into a compromising position. Very difficult, because once she had decided it would be Milt, she wanted no one else. And it struck her as strange that she was still a virgin. Many times she had heard the truckers on the lunch stools say:

"I don't give a damn how ugly a dame is, Willie, there's always bound to be at least *one* guy that's an opportunist, or on the make and desperate enough to take her one around the block!"

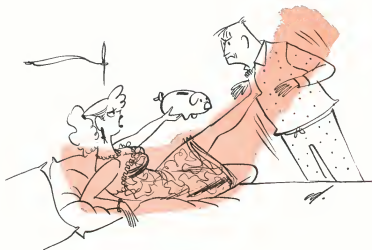
Then they would re-order, laughing lewdly about how they'd lay any broad inna world no matter how ugly she was, just so long as she was available. Then they would re-order—looking right through her as she winked back at them available.

And if that was so—that any girl who wanted to be made would be made, just by the laws of inevitability—why the hell was she still unexploited territory?

The problem got more acute as she started her plan to make Milt aware of her, to throw herself at him. She had her hair done with a benna rinse, so that little flecks of gold danced in it, and she wore it upswept. She wore her oldest uniforms that weren't faded, the tightest ones; and she hip-swished around Milt, eyeing him openly, licking her lips till they glistened, stopping just in sight of him by the curve of the counter and slowly pulling up her skirt, up the long, lithe length of her leg, and tightening her garters right before him. She didn't clean off the counter before him from her proper place in front of him, but came around, out into the lunch-room, and leaned over his shoulder to wipe the rag around the nicarta, brushing his back and arms and sides with her hot, tensed, straining breasts.

And because of this, the problem got much worse, more acute. Because at that point the other truckers seemed to realize she was radiating a sex-aurea, seemed to realize she was a woman, and that she was on the make. And they decided: *Ugly? So what? Put a flag over her face.* . . .

It seemed that the moment Katy became aware of her womanhood—perhaps not her *desirable* womanhood, but the basic fact of femininity itself—she began to exude some wonderful something that made the other truckers



'Just tell me any other sure-fire way we'll ever be able to save any money.'

look at her with a new light in their eyes. But she knew what that light was. They still thought she was ugly, but man, she was available . . . and such a dog they could get her any time! That was what they thought.

Kathy thought that was it, which it was, of course, and since their interest was strictly carnal, she rejected them mentally, one by one.

Until only Milt Rodman was left. He was virile, and he looked so damned . . . so damned . . . she didn't quite think of the proper word. But he didn't ogle her and make lecherous tooth-sucking noises when she passed. He talked big like the rest of them in their stool bull-sessions, but he seemed more of a gentleman. Perhaps more shy, but still hot-eyed and . . . and . . . what was the word?

So Katy laid on the charm double-thick when he breezed in. She leaned over the counter, showing her well-made breasts practically into his face. The hello she gave him was extra warm, the meat she cut him was extra rare, the cut of pie she served him was extra large.

Yet Milt never seemed to notice.

Three months went quickly by, with Katy getting more frantic. She had decided on a man, finally, and he might move to a new route, without noticing her. Then she would sink back into that single, lethargic doomed state of ugly virginity.

She tried everything but tripping him and carting him off unconscious.

Finally, she hit upon a scheme that was bound to work, by its very blatancy. Even though Milt always

came into the diner, sat down and ate, gabbled a bit with the other boys off-duty, paid, got up and left . . . she was certain the plan would succeed. He acted as though he was in a trance, as far as she was concerned, and she decided it was probably because he could have a hundred pretty girls—so why should he bother with her? He watched his plate when he ate, and when he did look up, it was usually to locate the ketchup.

Which was usually centered directly between Katy's breasts.

But the Plan was bound to work . . . she took a week just to work it out perfectly.

Thursday night, late, as Milt was finishing his dinner, prepared to sack in on the front seat of the truck preparatory to the long drive into New York in the morning to catch the wholesale markets, Katy sidled up to him. She leaned in toward him, breathing her perfume delicately at his face.

The other truckers stopped eating and watching her hip-movement, began staring surreptitiously.

In a low, throaty voice she had been practicing all week, Katy mellowed, "Hi, Milt."

The big, chunky-faced man looked up, surprise dotting his eyes, and a certain cornered look showed there. It seemed for the first time in his life he had heard this woman speak, but he tossed it off quickly and grinned broadly, "Uh, yeah . . . baby? What kin I do fer ya?"

A roguish grin lit his face, and the other truckers chuckled in secret knowledge.

(turn over)

"Milt, will you give me a hand tonight?"

"Uh, how do ya mean?"

"Well, I've got a big load of packages in the back, and I was hopin' I'd find somebody to help me carry them home."

Milt looked dubious for a moment, began to say something, but Katy hurriedly added, "I'm not kiddin', Milt. I really need somebody's help. My apartment's onny a couple blocks, and it'll onny take a few minutes."

Slowly, like some gigantic mashing grinding weightily to the end of its cycle, Milt stared at her with decision forming.

Oh, migod, he's starin' at me so close, thought Katy in wildness. *Don't let him think I'm too ugly for a fast one. Please don't let him!*

Milt's expression changed. He nodded his head, "Okay, I'll help ya," and he went back to his veal chops.

Katy was abruptly covered with goose pimples, now that the time was so near. She quickly left the lunchroom, to the kitchen, where she persuaded the diminutive Clancy to get the relief girl in to replace her . . . right now! Then she changed into her street dress, and gathered up all the heavy packages of boxes she had loaded with sand, bricks and rocks, that afternoon.

Just as she re-emerged into the lunchroom, she heard Milt talking with three of the truckers. A florid-faced man who had whistled at her several times was saying gaily, "Well, I knew that poot would come across one day. Now that you got the ice broke, we can all expect to get it reg'lar."

He was grinning, even as Milt shoved him hard against the cigarette machine.

"Watch ya goddam mouth, ya stupid slob!" Milt was angry, and Katy felt a swelling of pride. And an aching in her loins at the same moment. He had stood up for her!

"Shall we go, Milt?" she interrupted, before the fight could progress any further. They left together, Milt carrying the dummy packages, and Katy added an extra hip-swish just to make those stupid truckies jealous.

Once in the apartment, it wasn't difficult to get Milt to stay.

"Would you like a drink, Milt?"

She carefully dropped the packages she had taken from Milt on the only available chair in the living room, indicating he should sit down on the sofa.

"Uh, yeah, that's swell," he answered nervously. "What'cha got . . . baby?"

"You name it," she said moving closer, till she was looking up into his ruggedly sprawling features. She didn't know where she had acquired this coquettishness, but now that she needed it, here it was. Her voice had sunk to a deeper key, and Milt looked down at her, half-brzenly, half-uncertainly.

He looked so . . . so . . . she fumbled with the word, caught the bright shine of Milt's eyes on her body, and finally came up with the right one. Competent. He looked damned competent.

"Uh, maybe I better not, uh, have that drink after all, ba . . . Katy. I, uh, gotta, uh, go back to the truck to sack out, ya know. I got that, uh, trip into the city tomorrow mornin'."

Katy moved toward him carefully, letting her hands slide up his chest till they rested on his shoulders. "I've

got an idea, Milt," she said huskily. "Why don'tcha sleep here tonight and go back to your truck in the mornin'?" It's much more . . . comfortable here."

Milt backed away, but she stayed with him.

This ain't no way for a red-hot competent man to act, Katy's thought bombarded her.

"No . . . I . . . uh . . . y'see, the truck's back there on the lot at Clanc . . ."

"It's locked, isn't it?" she asked cooly.

"Well, yeah, sure it's locked, but I gotta—"

She moved closer again, touching him lightly, as though she were handling a hot pan. She didn't know where these movements were coming from, how she knew the right thing, the stimulating thing, to do—but suddenly she wasn't thinking, just letting her body and her emotions lead her.

"Welllll then . . ." and she let it trail off slightly, letting her tongue glide smoothly, moistly, over her full lips.

She backed him another inch, and he collided with the sofa, sitting himself down heavily. To Katy he seemed to be looking about wildly, and she was vaguely glad to be between him and the door.

With a sinuous movement Katy slid down next to him, letting her high heels slip off, and folding her long legs beneath her. In the same motion she flicked off the lamp near the sofa. The room was now lit by only one dim bulb in the torchier near the television set.

As though drawing attention to the seclusion of the setting, Katy ventured, "We can watch a good show, and have a few drinks, and then maybe, well . . ." she trailed off again. Strange how effective *not* saying something could be.

Then, almost before she knew she was doing it, she was leaning forward, and her hands slid over his shoulders, down his broad back, and she was so close she could feel her breasts being smoothed flat in their bra casings, and even crouching on the sofa that way, she was close to him—all the way from her stomach to her lips. Which were on his own.

Hers were soft and pliant, while Milt's were thick and chapped. But somehow that made her all the more boiling inside, all the more anxious to have him, to let him take her. She let her tongue slide from her mouth, and met the slightly giving surface of his lips. Her tongue worked itself, trying to open his mouth, and like a bomb going off in her vitals, deeper than any physician might probe, her body prickled and burned, and she rubbed herself fiercely on him, till her whole being was a writhing thing demanding satiation.

His lips remained closed, and for an instant she brought her tongue back . . . then struck suddenly.

His mouth opened to hers, and the warmth of their bodies met in the mingled moisture of the kiss. She arched herself forward, feeling her nipples harden and press toward him. God, how she wanted to rip off her dress!

Then, as though it had been a signal, Milt began himself to move, pressing his heavy legs toward hers, and in a moment they had twisted—awkwardly but swiftly—and he was lying on her, his weight a great thing pressing her down.

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LITTLE EVA

No ice to cross here—Golden-curbed Eva Lynd is a girl who never suffers from glacial trouble. In fact, her sleek, elegant charm are enough to melt the ice-cubes in your highball in no time flat.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JERRY YULESMAN/TOMLE





In fact, this is just what your old Uncle Tom needs in his cabin during the long winter months . . .

(continued from page 7)

sleep was stabled. It was dark. Luis, who ran the cantina downstairs, allowed him to sleep in the garret. But the Standard Oil Company, who owned the garret and the roofing paper, owned the darkness too; it was Mrs Widdrington's, the Standard Oil Company's wife, darkness he was using to sleep in. She'd make a poet of you too, if you did not work anywhere. She believed that, if a reason for breathing were not acceptable to her, it was no reason. With her, if you were white and did not work, you were either a tramp or a poet. Maybe you were. Women are so wise. They have learned how to live unconfused by reality, impervious to it. It was dark.

and knock my bones together and together It was dark, a darkness filled with a fairy pattering of small feet, stealthy and intent. Sometimes the cold patter of them on his face waked him in the night, and at his movement they scurried invisibly like an abrupt disintegration of dead leaves in a wind, in whispering arpeggios of minute sound, leaving a thin but definite effluvium of furtiveness and voracity. At times, lying so while daylight slanted grayly along the ruined pitch of the eaves, he watched their shadowy flickings from obscurity to obscurity, shadow and huge as cats, leaving along the stagnant silences those whispering gusts of fairy feet.

Mrs Widdrington owned the rats too. But wealthy people have to own so many things. Only she didn't expect the rats to pay for using her darkness and silence by writing poetry. Not that they could not have, and pretty fair verse probably. Something of the rat about Byron: allusions of stealthful voracity; a fairy pattering of little feet behind a bloody arras where fell where fell where I was King of Kings but the woman with the dog's eyes to knock my bones together and together

"I would like to perform something," he said, shaping his lips soundlessly in the darkness, and the galloping horse filled his mind again with soundless thunder. He could see the saddlegirth and the soles of the rider's stirrups feet, and he thought of that Norman steed, bred of many fathers to bear iron mail in the slow, damp, green valleys of England, maddened with heat and thirst and hopeless horizons filled with shimmering nothingness, thundering along in two halves and not knowing it, fused still in the rhythm of accrued momentum. Its head was mailed so that it could not see forward at all, and from the center of the plates projected a—projected a—

"Chamfron," his skeleton said.

"Chamfron." He mused for a time, while the beast that did not know that it was dead thundered on as the ranks of the Lamb's foes opened in the sacred dust and let it through. "Chamfron," he repeated. Living, as it did, a retired life, his skeleton could know next to nothing of the world. Yet it had an astonishing and exasperating way of supplying him with bits of trivial information that had temporarily escaped his mind. "All you know is what I tell you," he said.

"Not always," the skeleton said. "I know that the end of life is lying still. You haven't learned that yet. Or you haven't mentioned it to me, anyway."

"Oh, I've learned it," he said. "I've had it dinned into



me enough. It isn't that. It's that I don't believe it's true."

The skeleton groaned.

"I don't believe it, I say," he repeated.

"All right, all right," the skeleton said testily. "I shan't dispute you. I never do. I only give you advice."

"Somebody has to, I guess," he agreed sourly. "At least, it looks like it." He lay still beneath the tarred paper, in a silence filled with fairy patterings. Again his body slanted and slanted downward through opaline corridors groined with ribs of dying sunlight upward dissolving dimly, and came to rest at last in the windless gardens of the sea. About him the swaying caverns and the grottoes, and his body lay on the rippled floor, tumbling peacefully to the wavering echoes of the tides.

I want to perform something bold and tragical and austere he repeated, shaping the soundless words in the pattering silence *me on a buckskin pony with eyes like blue electricity and a mane like tangled fire, galloping up the hill and right off into the high heaven of the world* Still galloping, the horse soars outward; still galloping, it thunders up the long blue hill of heaven, its tossing mane in golden swirls like fire. Steed and rider thunder on, thunder punily diminishing; a dying star upon the immensity of darkness and of silence within which, steadfast, fading, deepbreasted and grave of flank, muses the dark and tragic figure of the Earth, his mother.

GOD BLESS THE UGLY VIRGIN

(continued from page 56)

She moved her own legs with difficulty, letting them slide open slowly, letting his weight settle down on her even farther. Letting the heat of his loins reach her own.

His hands suddenly left her hips, began moving up and down, the skirt rising, the buttons seeming to open on the dress-front of their own accord. Then she felt the heat of his questing fingers, all along her thighs, and a tremor ran through her body. She felt his hands touching, touching, touching, on the inside of her legs, on her stomach, in the hollow of her torso, and then he was maneuvering away the fabric of the restricting bra, his fingers digging themselves with wonderful pain into the soft, firm flesh of her breasts. She had *known* he would be competent!

He settled back for an instant, as though about to commence a new attack on her yielding body, and his mouth moved off hers for a split instant.

"Wait a minute . . . Milt . . . wait . . . a . . ." she breathed out in a gasp, as he settled away from her. "Lemme get this dress off, it's my best one, and I don't wanna rip it, y'know."

Abruptly, he was off her, and moving toward the door, his steps faltering and shambling, as though he were drunk with some particularly heady wine.

Katy sat up on the sofa, her breath coming shortly, her dress tight around her thighs, the smooth roll of her stocking-tops making indentations in the firm flesh of her legs. One of her garters had come unfastened, and her brown hair was all about her face. She stared at him in bewilderment, then leaped up and grabbed his arm before he could twist the doorknob.

"Where ya goin'? Huh, where ya goin', Milt?"

He stared at her, and there was sweat on his face. His roughly heavy features were twisted in misery, but he let one corner of his mouth quiver up into a smile of mock bravado.

"I—I gotta, uh, go, baby. You know how it is, uh, Katy."

"Oh no y'don't!" she yelled, almost angrily, and grabbed him by the arm with both hands. She dragged him back toward the sofa with one step. And suddenly, summoning strength from some deep pit of emotion, she swung him full-force, tossing him back on the sofa. "You sidown again!"

She stood over him with hands on her hips, her hair disarrayed, her dress rumpled and still hiked tight to her full hips.

"Look, Katy . . . y'gotta unnerstan' . . . I, uh, you gotta let me tell ya somethin' . . ."

A look of strained bewilderment came over Katy Pascal's twenty-seven-year-old virgin features, and she sat down beside him. "Tell me what?"

"I . . . well, see my Mom, she . . . nh. no I can't tell ya!"

Katy slapped her forehead with the palm of her hand, and almost cried in hysteria. "Can't tell me? Can't tell me? Jeezus, Gawd! I practically throw myself at ya, and ya try to walk out on me! Then ya tell me ya can't tell me! I know I ain't no Sherree North, but . . ."

Milt quickly turned to her, pain rising in his face.

"No sir, baby!" he said definitely and with assurance, almost belligerently, as though she were castigating herself unnecessarily. "That ain't it at all. It's not that you're ugly . . . uh!" He looked as though he had fallen into a barrel of pig manure as the word "ugly" left his lips. He covered it quickly but stumbingly with, "I mean, 'cause you ain't as good-lookin' as some. It, uh, it ain't, uh, that at all."

Katy felt the blood pounding in her ears. She was getting sore.

"Well, then, ya big stupe, what is it?"

"Well . . ." his face suddenly suffused with red, starting from the open neck of his shirt, and climbing like a storm warning to the roots of his hair. He was blushing, and Katy felt herself melting inside. The big, overgrown . . .

"Go on," Katy urged more softly, moving closer, till her thigh touched his. She wanted to begin that animal rubbing again, but held off for fear it might ruin Milt's explanation. *But this ain't no way for a competent man to act*, she thought wryly.

"Well, y'see, I'm thirty-two, and I been livin' with my Mom all that time, and she . . . well . . . oh, heck!" He started to rise again, stopped cold in his track of thought, but Katy yanked roughly and he plopped down again. She prodded him.

"Go on. Go on!"

Milt's words abruptly came spilling out on top of one another. The explanation spewed forth all at once. "My Mom told me never to have anything to do with girls 'cause they was dirty, and that if I did any of that sexy stuff, I'd come down with the gleep or somethin' and that's why I didn't wanna insult ya because you probly heard me bulling with the other fellas, about all the girls I'd had, and I've never had any, cause actually I'm a . . . I'm a . . . virgin, see, and I been watchin' ya for weeks now and I kinda just didn't know how to say hello to ya and I remembered what my Mom said and I can't stay here no more cause if I do I'll probly do some of that sexy stuff with you and then I'll come down with the gleep or somethin' and I'll miss my drive into the city tomorra' . . ."

He ran out of air, and slumped back on the sofa dejectedly.

Katy sat wide-eyed. She could still hear his speech, spattering around inside her head. *Competent! Virgin!* Then she began to laugh.

Long and long, till she was clutching the rumped sides of her dress, pressing her hands frantically into her firm breasts to stop the laughter-pains. But it was no use.

"Now, uh, baby . . ." and Katy laughed all the harder, because she realized now why Milt always sounded so self-conscious about using that word. ". . . don't you laugh at me. C'mon! Stop that. My Mom was right about girls like you . . . you all got so much, uh, well, so much *experience*, a fella hasn't got a chance: he could get somethin' real bad!"

He seemed so childishly intense, Katy found herself laughing all the more. *Experience!* Oh, good gravy, this was too much! She roared, even knowing she was hurting him, but she couldn't stop. She tried to get the words out, tried to tell the big, hulking truck-driver she was a virgin, too, but they wouldn't come out. They bubbled up in



"Miss Peters—have mercy on a tortured heart!"

her throat and came out as laughter.

"Now look, don't you be laughin' at me. I didn't mean to say nothin' funny, and if I'd knowed you was gonna laugh, I wouldn't of told ya at all. I didn't mean ta be rude, and if I was gonna do them kinda things with anybody, why I'd be pleased to do 'em with you, but my Mom told me . . ."

Then Katy moved in on him, pressing him back and back and back till he was in the bedroom, and she put herself against the door, and locked it, and let the key fall to the floor, where she kicked it under the radiator, and then she began to undress, while Milt just watched.

She unbuttoned the dress down the front and slipped it over her head, letting it whisper to the floor. Then she reached behind herself, arching her back, and unfastened the bra strap. At that point the dullness left Milt's eyes, and he began undressing, slowly, as though not quite certain what he was doing. He stood there in his shorts and T-shirt, staring at Katy as she moved carefully and sinuously, dropping her panties, rolling down her stockings, moving toward him.

Then she was helping him with the rest of his clothing, and then the cool bed received them, and Milt found the strength to protest, in a small voice, "But my Mom said . . ."

And then Katy's lips silenced his Mom's words of warning.

It had been difficult for Katy. There had been some bleeding, but when it was all over, she knew it had been worth it. It had been worth waiting twenty-seven years

to enjoy. Even through all his clumsiness and bigness, Milt had been competent.

Finally, when the sun streamed through the venetian blinds, and neither of them had slept a wink, Milt got up and took a shower and dressed. Katy lay in bed and watched his big body moving back and forth across the bedroom, and she felt a sorrow building in her.

The big oaf would be gone, and she knew somehow that this was the first and last time she would know that pleasure.

Milt went into the living room, and she heard the front door open. She turned quickly and buried her face in the pillow, the tears mounting to her eyes, and a tightness in her throat. *Hell, not even a little goodbye.*

Then she heard, "Uh . . ." and turned back to see Milt framed in the doorway.

"I, uh, just wanted to ask if you'd be here tomorrow when I, uh, come back through?"

She smiled and nodded her head yes.

"Well, I'll, uh, help ya carry some more packages if ya need the help. And, uh, maybe we can have another, uh, drink, huh?"

Katy bobbed her head. Then Milt turned to go. He took a step and stopped. He turned, blushing fiercely, and mumbled, "Y'know, you're awful pretty, Katy . . . baby."

Then he was gone, and Katy lay there figuring. Milt passed through four times a week. And that was two hundred and eight times a year.

DRINKS THAT HAVE KNOCKED ME DOWN

(continued from page 15)

makes your hair stand on end. *Donqua* is indescribable—you are giving a perfectly lucid exposition on interplanetary physics when you fall asleep with baffling suddenness.

For those anxious to experience the human frame's reaction to Abyssinian beer, here is the inside knowhow on *donqua* brewing:

You soak some corn in water and leave it till it sprouts a little. Then you mix it with unsprouted grains and spread it in the sun to dry. You collect all the women of the village and get them to pound it in wooden mortars, and the excellent malt obtained from this is boiled and left to stand in a pot for a few days, while each night a little more malt is thrown over the liquid to excite fermentation. The stuff is drunk as soon as it has finished brewing, otherwise the taste is intolerable. The women are the chief brewers in Abyssinia. In fact, to qualify for a wifehood at all, a lady must produce a certificate of efficiency in the art of *donqua* brewing. The boys insist on that above all else.

A similar beer was used by the Egyptians both as a beverage and as a libation to their gods. Xenophon speaks of "bowls of barley beer in which both grains and Egyptians are floating."

I once sampled a bowl of Hindu *soma* in Mysore, India. This beverage, described in Hindu mythology as the original intoxicant of the human race, was the predecessor of the vine. It is made from the milky fluid contained in the climbing bindweed and its effect is that of radioactive champagne. The natives prepare it by carefully squeezing out the latex of the plant, and then inducing a process of fermentation by allowing it to stand. Incoherent hymns to its praise occupy a large part of the sacred writings of the Brahmins. These hymns exalt it into a mighty hiccupping god who can give new strength and vigor to his devotees, a claim resting on the extraordinary superiority complex it induces in imbibers.

It is still regarded as sacred in parts of India, and at the great annual festivals libations are poured out to Soma, the god of all drinks and drunks whose boundless powers extend even to the granting of immortality. The ancient Persians also revered it as *Haoma*.

There's nothing sacred about Mexican *pulque*, but it packs a punch that used to flatten even the great Pancho Villa. It is the sap of the maguey or false aloe (agave). When the plant is on the point of flowering the peasants cut and hollow out the flower stalks, so that the sweet sugary sap, on its way to feed the bud, is arrested and caught in the hollow. By standing, it ferments and forms a beverage that produces alcoholic oblivion faster than anybody can say "same again."

But it might as well be orange juice compared with Patagonian *chi-chi*. This is the name given to an extremely rude sort of cider which the Patagonians brew in the autumn when the wild apples are ripe. It tastes a little like our own rough cider but is more bitter. To make it à-la-Patagonia is simple. You just dig a few foxholes in the ground and carefully line them with the hides of horses to add piquancy and prevent any of the

precious juice soaking into the earth. Then you collect the apples and throw them into the pits. They decay and ferment, and their juice is collected.

This potent brew provides the materials for the grand annual drinking bout of the Patagonian peasants. The women have learnt by experience what the results of this strictly stag orgy too frequently are, so just before it begins they go round, stealthily collecting knives, clubs, revolvers, shotguns and knuckle-dusters from their men. With these and their children they creep away and hide in the desert until their lords and masters have drunk themselves silly on Patagonian *chi-chi*, and slept themselves sober again.

It is a somewhat sad reflection on life that these wild apples used in *chi-chi* brewing are the only legacy left by a few devoted monks, who, soon after the conquest of South America, set out to convert the Patagonian savages. The monks took with them various implements of husbandry, and European grains and seeds for cultivation. But they were all soon murdered, and only the apple trees flourished, propagated, and produced excellent fruit in a climate more congenial to them than to the monks.

Of a different class of alcoholic beverage is that known as *kephir*, drunk by comrades of the Caucasus. This is really effervescing milk, the effervescence being caused by the introduction into the milk of horny yellow-brown masses known as *kephir* grains. When these are moistened they swell up into lumps, and placed in the milk they produce lactic acid, alcohol and carbon dioxide, a mixture not to be scorned by any man's man anxious to slake his thirst.

The secret of *kephir* is its delayed action, which can be devastating. One minute you are dejectedly sober, the next you are being deliriously jet-propelled through an alcoholic cloud.

Koumiss is a similar beverage made from effervescing milk. On the Asiatic steppes the milk usually employed is that of mares, though the milk of goats and asses is often used too. The mares' milk variety used to be credited with valuable nutritive properties in this country. It was brought over by a Dr. Jagielski who claimed in the pages of one of our foremost medical journals that *koumiss* would one day occupy a position in every doctor's prescription book, compared with which that of cod-liver oil, stout, and beef extract would be quite secondary.

Many a veteran has sampled Japanese *saké* as they make it over there, obtained by the distillation of rice. It resembles very pale sherry, though its taste is somewhat acid. The best *saké* is white, but there are many varieties, all of which taste a little "off" to Americans, and if indulged in doggedly, deposit them under the table in an astoundingly short time.

The most futile drink of all would appear to be *arrack*, at any rate so far as Americans are concerned. With most drinks men grow amiable, friendly, solemn, sentimental, despondent, taciturn, talkative, quarrelsome, ferocious, or merely silent in their cups, and some pass through all these interesting phases in turn. But with *arrack* a man drinks three glasses in three minutes—because each glass makes him twice as thirsty—falls across the table, and sleeps noisily for twelve hours.



"You will marry a tall, dark, handsome man who isn't too particular."

Usually *arrack* contains between fifty-five to seventy-five per cent alcohol. It can be distilled from palm toddy, or from rice or molasses fermented with palm juice, or even from the flowers of the *mahua* tree. It is inferior, injurious, and extremely potent.

The operations of the Cingalese toddy drawer who obtains the raw material for *arrack* are simple enough. He swarms up the coconut tree and binds all the shoots bearing embryo nuts firmly together, cuts off the ends and attaches beneath them an earthenware vessel holding about a gallon. Then he goes to sleep for twenty-four hours, during which time the vessel has been filled with sap. It looks like milk and water, and tastes like soda water and milk slightly flavored with coconut. In a few hours rapid fermentation takes place, and by midday the sap becomes toddy, resembling a poor acid cider. From this *arrack* is made by distillation.

In the fertile oases with which the Sahara and other deserts of North Africa are dotted grow large groves of date palms from which the Arabs obtain an intoxicating

beverage which they call *lagmi*. When drunk immediately the sap of this palm resembles rich milk, but when allowed to stand for a time it ferments and acquires the flavor and sparkling qualities of champagne.

The use of wine is strictly prohibited by the Koran, but the intoxicated Mohammedan excuses his apparent disregard of the injunctions of the Prophet by saying, "*Lagmi* is not wine, it is the sap of the sacred palm. The prohibition of the Koran refers to wine only."

But alcoholic fluids are by no means the only intoxicants known and used by oblivion-seeking humanity. The term "tea-drunkard" is unknown in the U. S., but is common enough throughout Russia. If the reader likes to make the experiment, let him try drinking a dozen or fifteen cups of tea in the Russian style, without milk or sugar but flavored with lemon juice, in the space of a couple of hours. He may decide that there is something rational about an epithet like "tea drunkard" after all.

THE ANGEL AND THE RABBIT

(continued from page 11)

"Gee, you're strong," Angelina said.

Bobby leaned his back against the door. A strange gleam shone in his eyes and a sneer deformed his lips. "I never thought you—!" He struggled for words. "I never thought you were a—"

"Don't be a spoil-sport," Angelina pouted. She was hurt and shocked by his attitude, but she remembered his tender years and forgave him.

She went to him, looping his arm in hers and leading him back to the sofa. She pressed against him and forced him to sit. Then she plunked on his lap, wriggling every curve at her command into him.

"Help me off with my blouse, lamby pie."

Disgust curled his features. *He is young*, Angelina thought. No more the cocky kid with the jazzy wisecracks. Here was a lad as moral as sixteen years of age can be. It made her want to call the whole thing off, but she decided that she had gone too far to quit now.

She unbuttoned her blouse and languidly removed it. She wanted to say, *look, no bra!* Instead she bent her head demurely, eyeing the twin mountains, almost perfectly shaped, and their rosy peaks.

She thrust the expanse of white belly, slightly rounded, and the black triangle in front of him. She turned slowly on tiptoe to show him the sculpture of shapely legs molded into columnar thighs and buttocks like full moons.

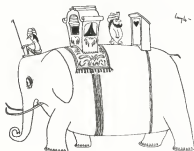
He stared like a paralyzed man, bug-eyed and stiff.

She piled on top of him, placed his hands on her great breasts and stripped him down. This time when she fell backwards, the lean naked form of Bobby leaped upon her and stretched lengthwise over her, squirming and kicking.

She raised him into position and his haunches hopped—a crazy, scared, hopping rabbit. He plunged and bounded and ran and leaped in this wild, coupled, isolated race. She chased and collided with him and caromed off him again and again. His breath was hot on her cheek. Her own breath shortened into a crescendo of pants. The race quickened to a backbreaking speed.

Soprano gasps and moans issued from her. "Oh! Oh! Ohhhhhh!"

She pushed him away, sank deep into the cushions and closed her eyes in utter contentment.



From far away a voice whispered to her. It called her by name. She luxuriated in the sweet slumber, but the whispering voice called and called her, rising in volume.

Then quite loudly: "Angelina."

She opened her eyes to see Bobby, fully dressed, standing over her. "Darling," she said.

He didn't answer, so she let her feelings pour from her. "I'm going to be nice to you, darling," she said. "Matt—we're finished. He'll probably leave tomorrow. Then it'll be just you and me, darling. Matt never sticks it for more than two days. Likes to think of himself as a rover. I'll divorce him if you want. And get a job. And—"

There was that strange look in Bobby's eyes and the scowl on his face.

"Don't be too hard on me," she begged. "I'll be nice to you, you'll see. And I don't want you to do a thing for me, except like me a little. I'll get a job. Support myself. Because you're too young to even think of taking on a big old burden like me. Matt'll leave tomorrow. Then we can have the nights together—"

She saw the something-green in his hand. He let it drop and it fluttered onto her breast.

It was a dollar bill.

The door slammed and Bobby was gone. She swung her bare legs over the edge of the sofa, sat up, held the bill in front of her and gazed at it.

It was clear what Bobby had meant to say by the dollar. It was a mean trick, even for a kid. She remembered the money she had collected from Matt that afternoon, and the comparison brought hysterical giggles.

She padded barefoot to the clothes closet and drew a cotton robe around herself, still shaking with the giggles. What the hell difference did it make? Right now, she'd have some coffee. There'd be plenty of time to think and cry later.

"Still gonna divorce me?" Matt hunched over her in the corridor doorway, traveling-bag in hand. Light from the corner street lamp two-toned his blue uniform.

"No," she said. "I changed my mind."

A grin showed through the shadows on the red face. "Knew you'd come to your senses." He pinched her cheek. "Well, see you in a month or so. Be good."

She raised on her toes and let Matt peck at her lips. Then he sidestepped brusquely onto the pavement, bag swinging from his arm, and strolled into the darkness.

Angelina went to the bench. She didn't have to wait long for the boys to come, a mob of them, stepping through the fuzzy beam of the street lamp straight towards her.

She recognized Phil, Alex and then Bobby. That young buzzard. Him and his one dollar. Hadn't wasted any time tattling on her, either.

Most of the boys tramping towards her under the street lamp were strangers. Good news travels fast. It was okay, though. Fitted into her scheme, the new way she was going to live.

Because maybe one of those boys had five dollars to spend. Or even three dollars. For sure, none of them was gonna get it for less than two...



"So I told him, look, Herbert, you bit me first."

ERIC MOTT IN HOLLYWOOD

(continued from page 20)

"There, my dear," Hal said, patting Miss Salvini's shoulder paternally. "What you are doing is a brave thing and you will not go unrewarded. You'll star in my next picture."

Miss Salvini seemed to recover somewhat at that and her tears gave way to a brave smile.

"You are a cad," Hal said. "You are a foul cad!"

"Yes, he is," Miss Salvini said. "He is the most . . . most!" And her lips trembled queerly and she felt her back and it was obvious that Miss Salvini was rather confused.

"I'll have my driver take you to your hotel," Hal said to Eric.

"All right," Eric said, seeing the inadvisability of argument.

"And . . ." Miss Salvini said, bearing up under a final sob, "will you have him drop me off at my place?"

"Of course, my dear," Hal said. "But I'll take you myself if you'd rather not ride with this cad."

"No . . . we mustn't do that. It would look strange. Besides you must remain at the party. No . . . I'll be perfectly all right. The chauffeur will see me safely behind my locked doors."

That time, Eric thought, sounded somewhat confusing. Did she mean that she was going to take the chauffeur behind her locked door with her, or was he simply going to . . . ?

They left. Eric dressed, packed, went outside and Hal led him to the car. "I trust none of this will get out,"

Hal said menacingly. "Miss Salvini has a reputation and . . ."

"I understand," Eric said, wondering if he might not get a part in one of these movies because he thought he had done rather well himself.

Eric sat in front beside the chauffeur, a very large man with a square jaw. Miss Salvini sat, dabbing at her eyes, in the back seat. The car roared off.

They had gone only a few miles when Eric heard Miss Salvini's voice. "Driver," she said, "stop the car."

The driver stopped, the motor idling.

"Mr. Mott," Miss Salvini said, "if you will come back here . . ."

Eric glanced at the chauffeur and said softly. "You heard her?"

"I heard her," the chauffeur said.

"No rough stuff?"

"I heard her," the driver assured.

Eric got in the back seat. He sat very straight. He felt Miss Salvini move toward him, felt her hands . . . her mouth. . . The car sped along.

"This Hydrogen Bomb," Miss Salvini said, draping herself over him, "it's the most, you know?"

Eric smiled pleasantly. "You liked it?"

"Ohhhhhhhh," she said. "We could go to my place and Boom!"

"There is a little variation. I mean, I didn't get to show you the other. . ."

Miss Salvini giggled. "Boom," she said. "Boom. Boom. Boom."

THE DOLLAR READING

(continued from page 51)

a lamp. The table was covered with dark velvet, and held what looked like an inverted fishbowl. The double doors to the rest of the flat were screened with a muslin curtain. The air was close, with a suggestion of incense.

"Won't you be seated?" The girl awkwardly took the chair opposite. "And now, just what is the nature of your troubles?"

"Troubles?" Dominic said in surprise. "Haven't got a trouble in the world."

She looked a little hurt and confused. "Isn't there anything you'd like to ask the spirits? Maybe something pertaining to your lost ones?"

"Oh, the spirits," Dominic said. "Sure, I guess I can put them to work on something."

"Well, the ordinary reading is fifty cents. And then I have a more complete one for a dollar."

"You mean, a better class of spirits?"

"Of course not." She seemed annoyed, for some reason. "It's just a longer reading, is all."

"Oh, I see. I guess I'll try that one, then."

He passed her a dollar bill and she tucked it in the fold of her kimono. That alone was worth a dollar, Dominic glanced around the bare room.

"One nice thing about this business," he said conversationally, "I don't suppose you have to meet much of a payroll."

She smiled weakly and reached for the lamp. The room was suddenly dark except for a feeble glow in the glass bowl. Her features gradually emerged, full-mouthed, sort of Latin modeling, and long black hair with rich highlights.

"And now, what would you like to ask the spirits?" In the dark, her voice had a warm, tropical quality.

"How about getting their opinion," he said, "on the winner of the fifth at Santa Anita tomorrow?"

"The spirits don't concern themselves with gambling," she said severely.

"Gambling?" Dominic said. "Where's the gamble if they have the winner?"

"I'm sorry. I can only help you with questions of a spiritual nature." The girl shifted uneasily. "Unless you co-operate and hold the right thoughts, it won't work," she said helplessly. "Isn't there anyone from the beyond you'd like to ask about?"

"Gee, I don't know many dead people," he said apologetically.

"Try to think back. Someone in your childhood, perhaps."

Dominic grinned. "I didn't make friends easily. I was always pretty much on my own. Besides, I was too old for kids my own age." He could make out her eyes, sober and intent upon his own. "Were you like that too? By yourself a lot as a kid?"

"I guess I was," she said.

"Makes you grow up in a hurry, doesn't it? But after a while it gets lonely. Was it that way for you?"

The girl glanced down at the bowl. "We seem to be getting off the subject."

"Oh sure, I'm sorry." He settled back thoughtfully. "There was one friend I can remember. Name of How-

ard. Used to talk to him for hours—you know, about kid things. How old is God, who lives on the moon. . . He died about the time I started school."

"What was his last name?"

"That's funny," Dominic smiled. "I guess I never thought of him of having one."

"All right, now try to concentrate on the way you remember him best." She bent over the bowl, passing her hands across as if to clear it. "Yes . . . yes, I'm getting something. Murky, though . . . there seems to be a hostile interference."

Dominic nodded sympathetically. "I have the same trouble with TV."

"Wait, they're coming through! Closer . . . closer. Now I can feel them. The spirits are here!"

Dominic sat up in alarm.

"Be still. They're all around us. . ."

He glanced over his shoulder nervously. The girl gave him an angry look.

". . . and now I can see a little boy," she said irritably. "I can't quite . . . yes, he's forming. Yes, it looks like little Howard. Is that a sailor suit he's wearing?"

"That doesn't sound like Howard," Dominic said doubtfully.

"Wait, he's trying to tell you something." She stared into the shadowed depths. "Howard," she pleaded, "what are you trying to warn your friend against?" She nodded slowly. "All right, Howard, I'll tell him."

She sat back wearily and said in a matter of fact voice, "Howard said you're due for some bad luck. You should lay off gambling for a while—especially the horses."

Dominic nodded thoughtfully. "Well, he should know. Is that all?"

"What do you want for a buck? A personal appearance?"

He grinned. "What's the matter, don't the spirits like me?"

"Not especially." The girl's voice came sullenly through the darkness. "You're one of those skeptics."

"Oh no, Miss Zorita," Dominic said, injured. "I only wanted to ask Howard if he's making out all right."

"He's great. Don't lose any sleep."

"Well, I just wondered," he said clumsily. "I thought maybe he still had to pull a milk wagon every day."

He heard her inhale, then slowly let her breath out. "You're a cop, aren't you?"

"I'm afraid I am," he said cheerfully.

The lights came on, her hand dropped from the lamp. The glass bowl was dark again. In the banked light the girl's face looked tired and resigned.

"I get all the breaks," she said. "The second day, and I draw the law. I can sure pick 'em, can't I?"

"Tough," Dominic said coarsely. He took one of Herman's cigars from his pocket, lit it and put his feet up on the flimsy table.

She gave him a look of contempt. "Get your fat feet off the table." She stood up. "Come on, sport, let's go. You probably got some important assignments. Like catching old ladies picking flowers in the park."

"Don't be insultin' the law," Dominic said, in his idea of a brogue, "or it'll go hard with you." He gave her a slow, deliberate once-over. "It isn't every day I catch me

a psychic consultant with a little style to her. So I'm after this rap," he leered, "that there's a way you can square this rap. If you know what I mean."

"Know what you mean? Why, it's all over your face, you dirty bastard!"

It was almost impossible to keep from laughing, but he made it.

"Now where did I go puttin' me badge?" Dominic groped in mock alarm through his pockets. "Sure and be-jaysus, some dirty crook has stolen it!"

The girl slumped to her chair and began laughing, weakly in relief at first, and then with rich spasms. Finally she was able to speak.

"Lord, you had me sold! I thought you really *were* a cop."

"It's a gift," he said.

"Thanks for being such a good sport."

"Likewise," he said.

"Well anyway," she reached in her kimono for another dollar's worth, "here's the refund on your admission." She tossed the bill on the table.

"Who's complaining?" He let it lie there. "Tell me, have I really got flat feet?"

"It was an optical illusion," she said.

Beyond the snug half-shadowed room, they could hear the mistily dissolving afternoon. He watched her smile privately.

"You and your talking horse," she said. "That was a lowdown trick to pull."

"It's true, though. Every word," Dominic said. "Howard and I were great buddies. He had a knack for intelligent listening that I've never run across since. Didn't things like that ever happen to you?"

"I had a Scotty once," she said, "a moth-eaten little mutt . . . look, what're you trying to do, embarrass me?"

He laughed. "Where'd you pick up this racket?"

"I don't know, just an impulse. I got tired dodging the floor-walker in the department store I worked for. He had big plans for the girls—all horizontal," she said. "At least this was something I could do sitting down."

"Who are you when you aren't Madame Zorita?"

"Lisa Perez. You?"

He told her.

"Nice name," she said. "Nice guy. Pick up your buck, Dominic, and you'll still be a nice guy."

"I got an idea," he said. "Why don't we put it to work? Like maybe invest it in a bottle of wine?"

She laughed, considering it. "Well, since you're my only customer today, I guess I better humor you."

"Wonderful. I humor so easily."

At the wall phone he said, "Hello, Herman? This is Lucky. Listen, send over a bottle of sparkling burgundy. Oh, and better throw in a barbecued chicken, too. What's the address here, Lisa?" He repeated it into the phone. "And I guess maybe a few garlic sausages—enough like they were a belt to fit around a fat man. You, for instance." He turned. "You like kosher pickles, Lisa?"

"Try me," she said.

"Got that, you *gonnif*? Anything else you can think of, Lisa?"

"Well, if you're going to spend the whole dollar," she said, "how about a bale of hay for Howard?"

(turn over)

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It turned out that the double doors off the parlor opened on the bedroom. They pulled a laundry hamper over beside the bed, and it made a table of sorts. They didn't wait for the wine to chill, but had it on the rocks instead, and by the time it was less than shoulder-high the barbecued chicken was a skeleton. By the time the bottle was a dead soldier the garlic sausages were gone, the radiator was hissing cheerfully and there was a full soft rain.

Lisa was in a drowsy sprawl at the foot of the bed; Dominic had a pillow propped behind him. There were nice sounds on the radio, some old Lunceford records from a disk jockey with nostalgia, and if Dominic had ever felt better, it was too much trouble to remember when.

He rolled over beside Lisa, took her face between his palms, studied it for a moment and then kissed it. She didn't quite respond, holding back a little.

"All right, I won't be greedy," he said. "I'll settle for just an ordinary perfect evening."

She shook her head. "No, it isn't anything I didn't expect. Or maybe even want..."

He leaned down again, but she sat up. "Listen," she said quickly, "I don't think I'm going to make it with this gypsy thing, do you? I'm not really very good at it, am I?"

"No," Dominic said.

"But I'll be damned if I'll go back to the department store. The hours aren't worth it and—well, I guess I'm just plain lazy," she said defiantly. "I think I must be a whore at heart. Or at least I could be. If I could pick my customers," she said, not looking at him.

"I'm listening," he said.

Lisa turned to face him directly. "I have to start thinking about next month's rent," she said. "Could you help me out?"

"How much help did you have in mind?" Dominic said.

"I don't know," she said awkwardly. "I feel so stupid about it. Twenty dollars would mean a lot to me. Are you hurt?"

"No," he lied. "We're adults. And I can't think of a nicer way to squander twenty dollars."

"You don't really mind?"

"No," he said. "Look, in spite of what Howard said about my gambling—would you like to go for double or nothing?"

She laughed nervously. "Sure. How?"

"I got a twenty in my billfold," Dominic said. "You decide if you want the serial number to end in odd or even. If you're wrong, I keep it. If you're right, you get another one just like it."

"All right," Lisa smiled. "I'll go for the big evening. Odd."

He took a twenty from his wallet. "T859763," he repeated slowly, then shook his head and tossed it over to her. He took out another twenty, started to hand it to her then read it aloud. "L925802. Why couldn't I have picked this one?"

Lisa laughed happily in relief and took both bills. "I guess I should stuff these in my stocking. Isn't that the way they do it in the movies?" She hesitated. "Look, you were such a good loser—can you really afford it?"

Dominic shrugged. "Once in a while, I guess. I work for the city."

"Civil service?"

He nodded.

"I had friends in civil service. It doesn't pay that well." She struggled with herself a moment, then put the bills in his hand and patted it. "My rent's not due for two weeks yet," she said. "I'll think of something. Let's pretend you won."

"Thanks very much, baby," Dominic said. "But I think we're both winners. Those serial numbers wouldn't have been lucky for you."

He roughed her hair with his palm and whistling, removed his coat, enjoying the way her eyes bulged when she saw the Police Special in his shoulder holster.



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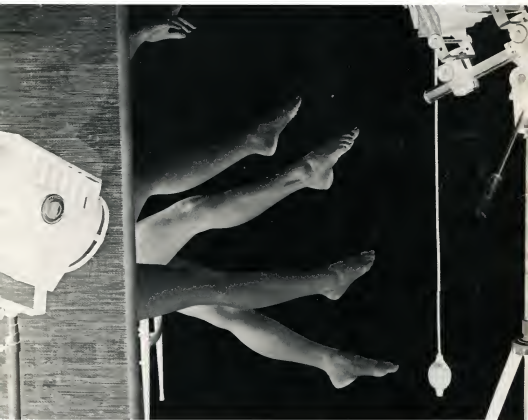
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40-26-36

39-24-38



**THIS MONTHS' MISS DUDE
GIVING MOTHER GOOSE
THE ONCE-OVER**

also

**GOD BLESS THE UGLY VIRGIN
ERIC MOTT TAKES HIS
H-BOMB TO HOLLYWOOD
DRINKS THAT HAVE
KNOCKED ME DOWN**

